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Fairy tales

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Hauff's Fairy Tales.

THE STORY OF THE FALSE PRINCE.

"The tailor's heart swelled with pride and joy."

FAIRY TALES

BY WILHELM HAUFF

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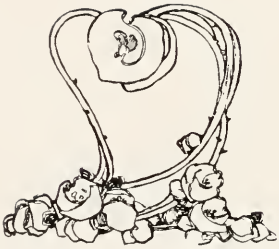

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THE STORY OF CALIPH STORK

CHAPTER I.

The Pedlar.

CHASID, Caliph of Bagdad, was taking his ease one beautiful afternoon, stretched out upon his couch. He had just awakened from a little nap and was in a pleasant mood. From time to time he drank from the cup of coffee one of his slaves handed to him, and took long whiffs from a rosewood pipe, stroking his long beard the while, with an air of extreme complacency. In short, it was evident that the Caliph was in a very good humour.

It was the best time in the day for any one to approach him on business, for he was usually inclined to grant any request one might ask, and for this reason, his grand vizier Mansor was wont to visit him at that hour. On this particular afternoon he came as usual, but seemed unaccountably

quiet and thoughtful. The Caliph removed his pipe from his mouth and said: "Why do you look so serious, Grand Vizier?"

The grand vizier crossed his arms on his breast, bowed low before his master, and answered:

"Sire, it is no wonder I look disturbed, for below the palace wall stands a pedlar, who has such beautiful goods for sale that it angers me to think I have no money to spare just now."

The Caliph, who had long wished for an opportunity to confer some gift upon his vizier, sent a black slave to fetch the pedlar.

Very soon the slave returned, ushering the pedlar into his master's presence. He was a fat little man, with a sunburnt face and dressed in rags. He carried a pack in which all sorts of wares were huddled together, pearls, rings, richly-chased pistols, goblets and combs.

The Caliph and his vizier took stock of everything, and finally the Caliph purchased handsome pistols for himself and his vizier Mansor, and a beautiful comb for Mansor's wife.

As the pedlar was about to close his pack, the Caliph noticed a little drawer and asked if there was anything in it for sale.

The man opened the drawer and took out a snuff-box containing a dark coloured powder, and a paper covered with very curious characters, which neither the Caliph nor his vizier were able to read. "I had these from a merchant, who picked them up in the streets of Mecca," said the pedlar. "I do not know what they

contain and they are at your service for a very low price, as I do not know what to do with them."

The Caliph, who was always glad to purchase rare manuscripts for his library, even if he could not read them himself, bought both snuff-box and paper, and dismissed the pedlar.

But the Caliph was curious to know what the writing on the paper meant and asked the vizier if he knew of any one who would possibly be able to decipher it.

"Most gracious lord and master," said the vizier, "near the great Mosque dwells a man known as Selim the Learned, who understands all languages; bid him come hither and maybe he will understand these mysterious characters."

The learned Selim was soon sent for and the Caliph addressed him thus: "Selim, it is said of you that you are a very learned man; look well at this writing, and see if you can read it. If you are able to do so, I will give you a new robe for feast days, but if you are unable to do so you will receive twelve strokes upon the back and five-and-twenty upon the soles of your feet, because you have masqueraded under the name of Selim the Learned."

Selim glanced at the writing intently and suddenly cried out: "It is Latin, my Lord, most certainly it is Latin."

"Very well, then," commanded the Caliph impatiently, "if you know that it is Latin, tell me what it means."

Selim began to translate: "Man, whoever you be, who shall find this, praise Allah for his mercy. He

who shall take a pinch of the powder in this snuff-box and say the word 'Mutabor' shall be able to transform himself into any kind of animal and understand the creature's language. When he wishes to return to his original form he must bow three times towards the East and repeat the same word. But let him beware, when in the transformed state, never to laugh, otherwise he will forget the magic word and will be condemned to remain an animal."

When Selim had finished reading, the Caliph was beside himself with joy. He made Selim take an oath that he would not reveal the secret, gave him a handsome robe, and sent him away.

"I call that a first-rate purchase," said he to Mansor. "How I long to become an animal! Early to-morrow morning you shall come with me, we will go out into the fields, take a pinch of snuff from my box, and then listen to all that is being said in the air and in the water, in the field and in the woodland."

CHAPTER II.

The following morning the Caliph Chasid had scarcely finished his breakfast, when the grand vizier appeared in order to accompany his master upon his morning walk. The Caliph tucked the snuff-box containing the magic powder into his sash, and having commanded his attendants to remain

behind, he and his vizier set out alone upon their way.

First they passed through the royal gardens, but looked in vain for some living creature so that they might test the power of the powder. Then the vizier suggested they should visit a pond where he had frequently seen a number of storks disporting themselves, their dignified ways and hoarse cries having attracted his attention.

Immediately their legs began to shrink.
(P. 14)

The Caliph approved of his suggestion and accordingly they went to the pond. On their approach they noticed a stork walking gravely to and fro, searching for frogs, and now and again uttering loud cries; at the same time they saw, above them in the air, a second stork floating gracefully towards them.

"I wager my beard, Sire," said the vizier, "these two long-legs will hold an amusing conversation together. What do you say to our transforming ourselves into storks?"

"The very thing," answered the Caliph, "but first let us be very careful that we know the way to become men again. Let me see—we must bow three times towards the East, and say 'Mutabor,' and immediately I shall be the Caliph, and you my vizier. But for heaven's sake do not laugh, otherwise all will be lost."

As the Caliph spoke he saw the second stork slowly drop to earth, so he quickly drew his snuff-box from his girdle, took a pinch, offered the box to his vizier, who likewise snuffed the powder, whilst the pair of them cried simultaneously, 'Mutabor!'

Immediately their legs began to shrink and to become thin and red, their beautiful yellow slippers turned into unshapely storks' feet, their arms became wings, their necks shot up from between their shoulders to the length of an ell at least, their beards disappeared, and their bodies were covered with soft white feathers.

"You have a pretty beak, my lord vizier," said the Caliph, as he stared in astonishment at his companion. "By the beard of the prophet, I have never seen such a sight in my life."

"Many thanks," replied the vizier bowing. "If I may be permitted to say so, you are almost better looking as a stork than a Caliph. But come, let us join our companions and find out if we really can understand stork language."

In the meantime the other stork, which had just alighted, was pluming its feathers as it approached the first stork, so the two newly-made birds hastened

to come up to them, and to their astonishment overheard the following extraordinary conversation.

"Good-morning, Mrs. Long-legs, how early you are up."

"Ah, my dear Clapperbill! I just came out to get a snack; anything I can offer you, my dear, in the shape of a bit of lizard or a tit-bit of frog?"

"Thanks all the same, but I've really no appetite—I came here for quite a different reason—I have to dance to-day before my father's guests, and I came here to practise a little by myself."

With these words the young stork began to twist and turn about in the most ridiculous attitudes imaginable. The Caliph and Mansor stared at her in surprise, but when she stood on one foot, stretched out her wings and struck an attitude of supposed grace, she looked so absurd that they could no longer contain themselves, but burst out into hearty and prolonged laughter. It was some time before they could control themselves, but at length the Caliph stopped laughing, and said: "Oh! what a joke that was—I would not have missed it for any money. What a pity our laughter frightened the silly things away; they might otherwise have sung to us also."

But suddenly the vizier remembered that they had been forbidden to laugh during the time of their transformation. He at once reminded the Caliph of this. "Mecca and Medina," cried he, "it would be a bad joke indeed if we had to remain storks for the rest of our lives. See if you can remember the magic word, for upon my soul, I seem to have forgotten it."

"We must bow three times towards the east and and say 'Mu-Mu-Mu—'"

No further could they get. They bowed and bowed until their beaks touched the ground, but try as they would they could *not* remember the magic word, and the unfortunate Caliph and his vizier were doomed to remain two storks.

CHAPTER III.

The enchanted pair wandered sadly from field to field, wondering what they could do to end their misery. They could not rid themselves of their birds forms, and it was equally impossible to return to the town and declare themselves to be the Caliph and his vizier, for who would have believed a couple of storks, and was it to be supposed the inhabitants of Bagdad would consent to be ruled by a stork?

And so they crept about for days, sustaining themselves meagrely on wild fruits, which they were scarcely able to eat on account of their long beaks, but as yet they had no appetite for lizards and frogs, and such-like delicacies. Their only relaxation was the pleasure they found in the use of their wings, for they were able to fly into Bagdad and watch, from the roofs of the houses, what went on in the city.

At first they noticed great sorrow and unrest, but within four days all this was changed and, watching from the roof of the Caliph's palace, they noticed a magnificent procession winding along in the street below—drums and fifes sounded, and a man clothed

in a scarlet robe, embroidered with gold, was seated upon a finely-caparisoned horse, surrounded by a glittering escort. Half the inhabitants of Bagdad came out to watch the procession, and cried as it passed—"Hail! Mizra, ruler of Bagdad."

They had no appetite for lizards and frogs. (P. 16.)

The two storks looked at each other and the Caliph said—"Can you not guess now why we have been thus bewitched? Mizra is the son of my deadly enemy, the powerful magician Kaschnur, who once in an evil moment swore revenge against me. But we will not despair; come, my faithful comrade, we will seek the grave of our great prophet, and perchance in that holy spot we shall be freed from the enchantment."

So they left the palace roof and flew towards Medina.

But they had had so little practice in flying that they soon grew weary. "Oh! sire!" groaned the vizier, after a couple of hours, "with your per-

mission I must rest for awhile, you fly too quickly for me. It is already evening, and would it not be as well to seek shelter for the night?"

Chasid agreed to his companion's request, and as he saw a ruin in the valley beneath, which promised to afford a roof to cover them, they flew down to it. The place seemed to have been at one time a castle. Beautiful pillars raised themselves in the dilapidated apartments, which still retained evidences of their former splendour.

Chasid and Mansor wandered through the corridors, seeking for a dry spot suitable for a resting place, when suddenly Mansor stood still.

"My lord and master," he whispered softly, "ridiculous as it may appear for a vizier, not to mention a stork, to be afraid of ghosts, there is no doubt I feel an uncomfortable sensation of fright, for can you not hear a weird groaning and sobbing noise close at hand?"

The Caliph listened and heard the unmistakable sound of human weeping. Anxious to solve the mystery he hastened towards the spot from which the sound proceeded.

The vizier seized him by the wing and begged him earnestly not to place himself in the way of fresh danger, but the Caliph carried a brave heart beneath his stork's feathers and, disengaging himself from his companion, though with the loss of some feathers, he hurried along the dark corridor.

Presently he came to a door which was closed, but not fastened, and from behind which he distinctly heard the sound of sighing and weeping. He pushed

the door open with his beak and stood astounded upon the threshold. In a ruined chamber, lighted only by the rays of the moon, which streamed through a little casement window, he saw a large owl. Tears streamed from her great brown eyes, and with hoarse

He bowed his long neck. (P. 20.)

screeching voice she bemoaned her sorrows, but no sooner did she perceive the Caliph and his vizier than she uttered a cry of joy; daintily wiping the tears from her eyes with her brown-tinted wings, she spoke to them, to their utter astonishment, in excellent Arabic—

"Welcome, O ye storks," she cried, "you come to me as tokens of my deliverance, for it was once prophesied to me that great good fortune would befall me through the intervention of two storks."

As soon as the Caliph had recovered from his astonishment, he brought his thin feet together and bowed his long neck in an elegant attitude.

"Owl," said he, "after what you have said, may I consider myself to be in the presence of a companion in distress? But alas! your hopes that we may be able to assist you are in vain. You will recognise our helplessness when you have heard our story."

The owl begged him to recount it, and the Caliph made her acquainted with all that had befallen them.

CHAPTER IV

When the Caliph had told his story the owl thanked him and said: "Now you shall hear my story and you will then see that I am no less unhappy than you and your vizier. My father is the King of the Indies, and I am his only and unfortunate daughter, Lusa by name. The same wicked magician Kaschnur, to whom you owe your misfortunes, bewitched me also. One day he came to my father and demanded that I should be given to his son Mizra for a wife, but my father, who is a hasty man, ordered him to be thrown down the steps. The miserable wretch knew, however, how to transform himself and approach me when I was walking in my garden. Disguised as a slave, he offered me a refreshing drink, but one which

changed me into this horrible form. Fainting with horror, I was seized by him and carried here, and before leaving me he shrieked these words in a terrible voice—

"'Here shall you remain, hideous and shunned even by the beasts themselves, until your end comes, or until some person shall be willing, in spite of your dreadful appearance, to make you his wife. This is my revenge upon you and your proud father.'"

"All this took place many months ago. Lonely and sad I have passed my miserable days, shunned by all, even the beautiful face of Nature turned from me, for by day I am blind, and it is only when the moon's faint rays pierce my prison window that the veil falls from my eyes."

As the owl ceased speaking, she once more wiped her eyes with her wings, for the recital of her woes had caused her tears to flow afresh.

The princess's story had made the Caliph very serious—"It seems to me," he said, "that there is a strong resemblance between your trouble and ours, but where shall we find the key to unlock the mystery?"

The owl answered more hopefully, "My lord as I told you, it was prophesied of me in my youth, by a wise woman, that good fortune would come to me by the help of a stork. Now, the magician who was the cause of all our misfortunes comes once a month to these ruins, and feasts and makes merry with his companions in an apartment close by. Many a time I have listened to their conversation and heard them recount their wicked deeds; might it not happen that

Kaschnur would perhaps let fall the magic word that would release you, during one of these revels?"

"Oh! dearest princess," cried the excited Caliph, "tell me, I beseech you, the date of Kaschnur's next visit!"

The owl was silent for a short space of time, then said she—"Do not be offended if I make a condition with you before granting your wish."

"What is it," cried the Caliph, "whatever it is, be sure I shall be willing to grant it you."

"Well, it is this," said the owl; "I am as anxious as you are to regain my natural form, and this can only happen if one of you will offer me his hand."

The storks appeared somewhat taken aback, and the Caliph beckoned his vizier aside.

"Grand vizier," said he, "it is a great nuisance, but you must just take her."

"Indeed," replied the vizier, "and when I reach home my wife will scratch my eyes out for my pains. Besides, I am an old man, whilst you are young and unmarried, and are therefore a more suitable match for a young and beautiful princess."

"Well, that is the point," the Caliph sighed sadly; "who told you she was young and beautiful? I don't care to buy a cat in a bag like that."

They argued together for some time, but when the Caliph found his vizier would rather remain a stork than marry the owl, he made up his mind to fulfil the condition himself.

The owl was overjoyed, and assured the two storks they could not have arrived at a more op-

THE CALIPH STORK

"The owl carried the ... to the silkworm the ..." (p. 25)

portune moment, for the magicians were to meet there that very night.

So she and the storks left the little room and threaded their way along a dark narrow corridor until they came to a broken-down wall, through the crevices of which a bright light streamed. The owl warned them to be as silent as the grave and pointed out a hole through which they could peep into the great hall beyond.

This hall was magnificently decorated, and lighted up by many different coloured lamps. In the middle of the apartment stood a round table set with a variety of the choicest dishes. Round the table were couches, upon which eight men reclined, and one of these men the storks immediately recognised as the pedlar who had sold them the magic powder. His neighbour invited him to recount his latest doings, and amongst other stories he recounted that of the Caliph and his vizier.

"What was the magic word you gave them?" asked one of the other magicians.

"A good difficult Latin one—it was 'Mutabor.'"

CHAPTER V

As the storks heard this word they were fairly beside themselves with joy. They ran so quickly to the door of the ruin that the owl could scarcely follow them. But when they reached the open air the Caliph turned to the owl and said in moved tones:—"Preserver of my life and of the life of my

friend, accept not only my eternal gratitude, but myself as your husband!"

He and the vizier then turned towards the East, three times they bowed their long necks towards the rising sun and cried "Mutabor," and in a moment they were restored to their former state, and Caliph and vizier fell into each other's arms and embraced, congratulating each other upon the joy of their newly-found life.

But who shall describe their astonishment when they looked round and saw a lovely lady, gorgeously attired, standing before them. Smilingly she gave her hand to the Caliph. "Do you not recognise your wife, the brown owl?" said she.

The Caliph was so enraptured at the sight of her beauty and grace that he declared the most fortunate thing that had ever happened to him was to be turned into a stork.

The three set out towards Bagdad together. As the Caliph found in his pockets not only the magic snuff-box, but his purse also, he was able to purchase in the next village all the necessaries required for their journey, and so they were able to push forward, and soon reached the gates of Bagdad.

Arrived there, the greatest astonishment prevailed at the sight of the Caliph and his companions. He had been given up for dead, and the populace was overjoyed to welcome back their beloved ruler, but their hatred towards the usurper Mizra was as great in proportion.

The people crowded into the palace and seized upon the old magician and his son. The Caliph

ordered the old man to be taken to the apartment of the ruin the owl had inhabited, and there to be hanged, but the son, who was ignorant of his father's magic arts, the Caliph gave the choice of death or a pinch of snuff. He chose the latter, and the vizier at once offered him the snuff-box. He took a mighty pinch, and, the Caliph pronouncing the magic word, he at once became transformed into a stork. The Caliph had a large cage made for him which he ordered to be placed in his gardens, and in which Mizra was confined for the rest of his life.

Long and happily the Caliph lived with his wife, the princess, the pleasantest hours of the day being when the grand vizier paid his afternoon call, and they talked together of their curious experiences as storks, and when the Caliph was in a particularly good humour he would condescend to imitate the vizier as he looked when a stork: he would strut stiffly up and down the room, flap his arms as if they were wings, and bow towards the East, vainly striving to recollect the forgotten word. This performance gave the Calipha and her children the greatest delight, but when the Caliph teased the vizier too sorely and croaked "Mu-Mu-Mu-" for too great a length of time, the vizier would threaten his master—"I will tell the *Calipha* what took place outside the door of the *owl princess's* chamber!"

FATIMA'S RESCUE

He knew a pirate ship had been seen in the neighbourhood. (P. 29.)

THE Cadi of Acara had two children named Mustapha and Fatima, who were the joy and delight of their infirm and ailing father, and who loved each other very dearly. Mustapha was just two years older than Fatima, and it was his constant effort to provide pleasure and amusement for his pretty little sister.

On her sixteenth birthday he gave a little feast for her, to which he invited all her favourite playfellows. The feast was set out in the garden, and consisted of the daintiest dishes that could be procured. After they had partaken of the meal, and when it was nearly evening, he suggested that he should take them out for a sail upon the water.

Fatima and her friends were delighted, for it was a beautiful evening, and the view of the town

from the water was a particularly fine one. When Mustapha had sailed the ship for a short time he wished to return to land; but the girls begged and entreated him to take them a little further out. He was most unwilling to do this, as he knew a pirate ship had been seen in the neighbourhood some few days earlier. The girls, however, were set on sailing out to a point of land that stretched far out into the sea, for they were anxious to land there in order to watch the sun set and see the great ball of fire sink down into the sea.

Just as they reached the point of land, they noticed a barque, manned with armed men, and Mustapha fearing it might mean danger, ordered the boat to be turned round and rowed towards land. But the barque pursued the smaller boat, overtook it and got between it and the land. By this time the girls began to realise their danger, and so terrified were they that they shrieked aloud and would not keep their seats in the boat. In vain Mustapha begged them to sit still, pointing out how impossible it was to make any way whilst they impeded the movements of the rowers. As the barque approached, with one accord they rushed to the opposite side of the boat and their weight overturned it, and in a moment they were all struggling in the water.

The people on shore had seen what was happening and several boats put off to assist Mustapha. They were just in time to help rescue the frightened girls, and at their approach the strange barque sailed away. At first it was impossible to find out if

everyone was safe; but when the girls were brought ashore it was discovered, alas! that Fatima and one of her companions were missing. In one of the boats was a stranger, and on Mustapha questioning him as to how he got there he owned that he had belonged to the pirate ship. That he had jumped overboard to come to the assistance of the sinking girls, and that his comrades had left him in the lurch when they fled from the approaching boats; but he had had time to see that two of the girls had been seized by the pirates and carried away in their ship.

The Cadi's grief knew no bounds, and as for Mustapha, he was beside himself with sorrow, for not only did he blame himself for the loss of his beloved sister, but her friend, who had also been taken captive, had been for a long time past his promised bride, and would have been his wife already had it not been that her parents were poor and the Cadi did not think her a suitable match for his son.

Mustapha's father was a stern old man, and as soon as his grief had sufficiently subsided he sent for his son and said:

"Owing to your folly, I have been robbed of the joy and consolation of my old age. Go, I banish you from my sight for ever, and the curse of your old father shall rest upon your head, unless by some chance you should be able to rescue Fatima, when I will forgive you and receive you once more as my son."

Mustapha had already fully determined to endeavour to rescue his sister and her friend, but he had

intended to seek his father's blessing before setting out upon his travels. However, the unjust treatment he received did but steel his heart and made him the more determined not to cease from his quest until he had been successful.

He spoke to the man they had captured from the pirate ship, and from him learned that the vessel was a slaver, and that the human wares were generally carried to Balsora and there disposed of.

Mustapha decided to travel overland, as there happened to be no ship sailing just then from his native town, and he wished to reach Balsora soon after the pirates. He had a good horse and little baggage and so he reckoned he could do the journey in six days' time, but alas! upon the evening of the fourth day, he was set upon quite suddenly by three men. Seeing that resistance was useless, and supposing the attacking party merely wanted his horse and money, he decided to surrender, which he did. The men then dismounted and, taking him in their midst, rode off with him at great speed.

It seemed to the poor youth that his father's curse was already about to light upon him, for he could not think how it would be possible for him to rescue Fatima and Zoraida, deprived, as he shortly expected to be, of all means. He and his companions rode silently along for about an hour; they then turned into a valley, skirted by gigantic trees and carpeted with soft green turf. A brook gurgled peacefully through the valley, and beside

it some fifteen to twenty tents were pitched, whilst a number of camels and horses were tethered to the tent-pegs. The sound of a zither, accompanying two fine manly voices, issued from one of the tents.

It seemed very improbable that people who had selected such a charming little spot for their camping place could have very evil intentions, and so Mustapha took heart and followed his guides quite cheerfully when, having unbound his feet and bidden him dismount, they led him into a tent, larger and more richly decorated than any of the others. The beautiful cushions, embroidered with gold, woven carpets, and golden dishes, in which sweet perfumes burnt, would elsewhere merely have betokened wealth and luxury; but in these lonely surroundings seemed to point to robbery.

On one of the cushions sat a little old man. His face was ugly, swarthy, and repulsive. A gleam of savage cunning in his eyes and a cruel look about his mouth gave him a hateful appearance. Although he seemed to be a person of some importance, Mustapha soon perceived that the tent had not been so richly decorated on his account, and his captors' words confirmed this—"Where is the Chief?" they asked the little man. "Away hunting," he replied "but he told me to take his place during his absence!"

"More the pity," replied one of the brigands, "for we must soon decide whether this dog is to die or whether we are to obtain a ransom for him, and that is a question for the Chief to decide, and not for you to meddle with."

The little man raised himself in wrath and attempted to box the ears of the man who had annoyed him by this speech, but as he could not

On one of the cushions sat a little old man (P. 32.)

reach to do this, he burst into a perfect volley of abuse, and as the other brigands were not slow to reply, the tent soon resounded with tones of angry voices.

But the curtains at the entrance to the tent were suddenly lifted and in came a tall handsome young man, stately and dignified as a Persian prince. His clothing and weapons were plain and unadorned, with the exception of a dagger with a richly decorated hilt and a gleaming sabre. His determined mien and his whole appearance were such as commanded respect without inspiring terror.

"Who dares to quarrel in my tent?" he demanded of the startled men.

For a moment there was silence and then one of the brigands recounted all that had happened. The Chief's face reddened with anger—"When have I ever set you in my place, Hassan?" he cried, and the little man seemed to shrink with fear, until he looked smaller than ever. He got up and began to slink out of the tent, when a good kick from the Chief sent him flying out of the doorway.

As soon as the little man had disappeared, the three men placed Mustapha before the master of the tent, who had seated himself upon the cushions. "We have brought you the man you bade us bring," they said. The Chief gazed earnestly at the prisoner and said: "Pasha of Sulieika, your own conscience will tell you why you are in the presence of Orbasan."

On hearing these words Mustapha flung himself at Orbasan's feet.

"You are in error, my lord," he said, "I am an unfortunate traveller, but not the Pasha of Sulieika."

The brigands appeared to be surprised, but the Chief said: "Dissimulation will not help you, I can bring witnesses to prove your identity." And he thereupon commanded that one Zuleima should be brought in.

An old woman appeared, and on being questioned as to whether or no the man before her was the Pasha of Sulieika, she answered immediately that he was.

"Wretched man," cried the Chief angrily, "you see how impossible it is to deceive me. You are not worthy that I should stain my good dagger with your blood, but to-morrow morning I will have you bound to the tail of my horse and will go a-hunting with you, till the sun sets behind the hills of Sulieika."

Mustapha's heart sank. "It is my father's curse that has driven me to this shameful death," he cried; "alas, sweet sister, and Zoraida, how can I ever hope to rescue you now."

"This pretence is useless," said one of the brigands, "see, the Chief bites his lips and feels for his dagger; if you wish to live another night you had best come with me quickly." And binding Mustapha's hands behind his back he was about to lead him from the tent, when three other brigands entered, with a prisoner in their midst. "Here, as you commanded us, we bring you the Pasha of Sulieika," said one of them, leading their prisoner before the Chief.

Mustapha glanced at the prisoner and could not but own that there was a great resemblance between

himself and the Pasha, only the other man was darker in complexion and wore a dark beard.

The Chief was much surprised to see a second prisoner: "Which of you really is the man I seek?" he asked.

"If you seek the Pasha of Sulieika," the prisoner answered proudly, "I am he."

The Chief regarded him with a stern and terrible look and then made signs that he was to be led away. This being done, he cut the cords that bound Mustapha with his dagger and invited him to take a seat by his side.

"I ask your pardon for the mistake that has occurred," he said, "but it was a strange interposition of Providence that placed you in the hands of my companions at the moment they were lying in wait for that vile wretch you have just seen."

Mustapha asked for one favour only as compensation, namely, that he might be allowed to proceed on his way without further delay, and on the Chief questioning him as to the reason of his great haste he told him all. The Chief then persuaded him to remain with him one night at least, telling him that both he and his horse needed rest, and promised to show him the next morning a short way by which he would be able to reach Balsora in a day and a half. Mustapha agreed to this and after being most hospitably entertained slept soundly all night long in the robber's tent.

When he awoke he found himself alone in the tent, but through the hangings over the doorway he

could hear voices, which seemed to belong to the Robber Chief and the little dark dwarf. He listened attentively, and to his horror heard the little man advising the Chief to murder him, as if he were allowed to go free he might betray the whole troop.

He listened attentively
(P. 37.)

Mustapha could not but perceive that the little man owed him a grudge, because he had been the cause of the sharp treatment he had received the previous day. But the Robber Chief, after reflecting a few moments, said: "No, he is my guest, and as such is sacred to me, besides which he does not look like a man to betray one."

He then thrust aside the tent curtains and entered—"Peace be with thee, Mustapha," he said, "we will drain a morning draught and then you should prepare yourself to start."

He handed his guest a cup of sherbert, and when they had each drunk, they saddled their horses and Mustapha mounted and left the camp with a lighter heart than when he had entered it.

As they left the tents behind them the Chief told his new friend that the Pasha they had captured the previous day, after having promised him and

his men the free range of his territory, had captured one of the best and bravest of them and, after torturing him terribly, had hanged him, and that now he should die himself.

Mustapha did not venture to remonstrate, being only too glad to escape with a whole skin himself.

When they reached the limit of the forest the Chief drew rein and offered his hand to Mustapha in farewell:

"Mustapha," said he, "you have been in somewhat a strange fashion the guest of the Robber Orbasan. I will not ask you not to betray me, but trust to you that you will not do so. You have suffered, without cause, all the pangs of the fear of death, and you deserve some compensation. Take this dagger and if ever you are in need of help send it to me and I will hasten to your aid. This purse of gold may also be of assistance to you on your journey."

Mustapha thanked him for his generosity, accepted the dagger, but refused the purse. But Orbasan, having pressed his hand, let the purse fall to the ground and then set spurs to his horse and rode off at such speed that Mustapha, seeing it was useless to overtake him, picked up the purse, and was astonished to find what a quantity of money it contained. Having thanked Allah for his goodness and recommended the robber to his protection, he continued his journey in a much more cheerful mood towards Balsora.

He reached that city on the seventh day of his journey, and as soon as he had put up at an inn he enquired when the next yearly slave market was to

be held. To his horror and distress he heard that he had arrived just two days too late for it.

The people sympathised with him over his delay and told him how much he had lost, for on the very last day of the market two young slaves had been put up for sale who were so beautiful that there had been great bidding amongst the people for them, and they fetched such a high price that only their present master, who was a very rich man, could afford to buy them.

On making further enquiries as to their appearance he could no longer doubt they were the two unfortunate girls he was in search of. He also heard that the man who had bought them was called Thiuli-Kos and lived forty miles away from Balsora; he was an elderly man who had amassed a large fortune, and had retired from public affairs and settled down to enjoy his possessions in peace and quietness.

At first Mustapha thought he would re-mount and try and overtake Thiuli-Kos, but then he reflected that he could do little, for he was but a single man against the large retinue Thiuli-Kos would no doubt have with him, and that it would be impossible to wrest his prey from him; he therefore thought of another plan. His resemblance to the Pasha of Sulieika, which well-nigh proved fatal to him, might stand him in good stead now, and he determined to enter Thiuli-Kos' house in that name in order to attempt the rescue of the two girls. He therefore engaged servants and horses and here Orbasan's gift of money assisted him. Having purchased magnificent

clothing for himself and his servants, he set out for Thiuli-Kos' palace. He reached it in five days and found it was built on a lovely plain and was so surrounded by high walls that few of the buildings could be seen from without. He took the precaution to dye his hair and beard a darker tint, and coloured his face with the juice of a certain plant he knew of, so that no one could have supposed he was any other than the real Pasha; then he sent one of his servants to Thiuli's palace to ask for a night's lodging. The servant returned accompanied by four beautifully dressed slaves, who led Mustapha's horse into the courtyard. They assisted him to alight and led him up a flight of marble steps to Thiuli.

Thiuli was a jolly old fellow and received Mustapha kindly, and ordered the best dishes his cook could prepare to be set before him. After dinner Mustapha turned the conversation to slaves, and the old man told him of the two beauties he had just lately bought, praising their appearance loudly, but regretting the fact that they appeared to be so sad, so that Mustapha retired to bed in high hopes of being soon able to effect a rescue.

He had been asleep about an hour when he was awakened by the light of a lamp streaming down upon his eyes. Raising himself on his elbow he at first believed himself to be still sleeping and dreaming, for before him stood the same swarthy little dwarf he had seen in Orbasan's tent. He carried a lamp in his hand, and a horrid grin distended his mouth from ear to ear. "What do you want?"

FATIMA'S RESCUE

"He made for the door, screaming lustily for help"

(p. 43)

asked Mustapha angrily, as soon as he had convinced himself he was awake.

"Don't disturb yourself," replied the little man. "I know quite well why you are here, your noble countenance is not unknown to me, but, had I not assisted at the hanging of the Pasha of Sulieika I might have mistaken you for him. But I am here to make a suggestion."

"First of all tell me why *you* are here," said Mustapha.

"Well," replied the little man. "I did not get on very well with the Chief, and so I left him. Our last particular quarrel was over you, and so, Mustapha, it is but fair you should promise me your sister for a wife, otherwise I will go straight to my new master and tell him who the Pasha of Sulieika really is."

Mustapha was beside himself with rage and fear; just as he had thought himself about to accomplish his design, this wretched little creature came to frustrate it. There was only one thing to be done, he must kill the little horror, and he sprang out of bed, meaning to catch him. But the dwarf had guessed what might happen and was prepared for him. Dropping his lamp, he made for the door, screaming lustily for help.

Mustapha was now in sad straits and all present hope of rescuing the two girls was at an end; he had to think only of his own safety. He looked out of the window and found it was some distance from the ground and that there was a high wall he would have to scale as well. However, as he stood

considering, he heard voices approaching, and just as the door was about to be burst open he jumped from the window, ran across the courtyard and, climbing the wall nimbly, had soon left his enemies behind. He never stopped running until he had reached the shelter of a wood, and then he threw himself down quite exhausted, to try and think what he should do next. Of course he had lost his horses and his servants, having left them behind him at Thiuli's house, but he still had a good sum of Orbasan's money in his girdle.

Very soon he had invented another plan to save his sister. He continued his way through the wood until he reached a village, where he purchased a horse at a low price which speedily carried him to a town. Here he sought out a physician and offered him several pieces of gold on consideration that he would concoct a draught which would give all the semblance of death without harming the patient, and another draught to counteract the effect of the first. Having made his bargain, he bought a false beard, a black gown, and all sorts of phials which a physician would be likely to have. He strapped his baggage on the back of an ass and retraced his steps to Thiuli's house.

He was so changed in appearance that he scarcely knew himself, and had little fear of being recognised by Thiuli-Kos or anyone else. He arrived at the palace and announced himself as the physician Chakamankabudibaba. Everything happened as he wished it to do. The old man was so taken by his high-sounding name that he at once asked him to enter and take a seat at his table.

After some conversation, in which Mustapha managed to give the impression that he was a very learned man, Thiuli said he would take this opportunity of having all his slaves examined and ascertain the state of their health. Mustapha was overjoyed to think that he was so soon to see his beloved sister again, but in this he was mistaken. Thiuli conducted him to his seraglio, it is true, but when they reached a splendidly-furnished room there was no one in it. "Chambaba, or whatever your name may be, dear doctor," said Thiuli, "behold this opening in the wall. Through this each of my slaves shall pass her arm and you can feel her pulse, and ascertain the state of her health." Mustapha made some objection to this arrangement, but Thiuli would not consent to alter it, only he did consent to give a few hints as to the previous state of their healths.

The slave slipped her hand through the opening (P. 46.)

Drawing a strip of paper from his girdle Thiuli now began to call out the names of his slaves, and

as he called the slave who answered to the name slipped her hand through the opening.

Six times had Mustapha felt the pulses and pronounced six slaves in good health, and then came the name of Fatima.

Trembling with joy Mustapha grasped the little white hand and then, with a grave air, pronounced the patient to be very ill.

Thiuli was very much concerned and asked the wise Chakamankabudibaba to prepare a medicine for her which could not fail to cure her. Mustapha left the room and wrote the following message: "Fatima, I will save you if you will consent to the following plan. I will give you a draught which will make you appear dead for two days; I have another draught in my possession which will restore you. If you consent, pretend that the simple draught I will send you has been of no avail; I shall know this is a sign that you agree and will see that the more potent draught is given you next."

He soon returned to the room, where Thiuli awaited him, bringing with him a harmless draught which he handed to Fatima. He felt her pulse once more, and managed at the same time to slip the little note under her bracelet; Thiuli was so distressed about Fatima's illness that he thought of no one else, and put off the medical examination of the other slaves until a more convenient season.

When he and Mustapha had left the room he said to him sorrowfully: "Chadibaba, tell me frankly what you think of Fatima's state."

"Alas!" answered the wise physician, heaving a

deep sigh: "may the prophet give you consolation for I cannot. Fatima is suffering from a malignant fever from which I am afraid she will not recover. Far from appreciating the plain speaking he had begged for, Thiuli flew into a great rage—"You wretched quack," cried he, "do you mean to say that the slave for whom I paid two thousand gold pieces is to die like an old cow? Take note, if you do not manage to save her life I will have you beheaded."

Mustapha saw that he had made a mistake and tried to reassure Thiuli.

Just then a black slave came to tell the physician that the medicine had done no good. "Exert your whole skill, Chakamdababelda or whatever your name may be, I will make it worth your while to cure her," shrieked Thiuli, almost weeping to think of the possible loss of his two thousand gold pieces.

"I will give her a draught that is almost certain to relieve her," answered Mustapha.

"Yes, yes," sobbed the old man, "by all means give her another draught."

Well pleased, Mustapha slipped away to fetch the sleeping draught, which he gave to the black slave to give to Fatima. Then, saying that he needed to gather a few healing herbs which grew on the banks of the lake, he hurried out of the palace.

As soon as he reached the bank he took off his disguise and cast it into the water, where it floated gaily about, then he hid himself in some bushes and waited for the approach of night, when he went and hid himself in the burial place attached to Thiuli's palace.

Mustapha had scarcely been gone an hour when the black slave came and informed Thiuli that Fatima seemed at the point of death. The old man at once sent his servants to fetch the doctor, but they returned shortly, saying that he had undoubtedly fallen into the water and been drowned, for his black robe was floating upon the surface, and every now and again they had seen his grey beard bobbing up and down. Thiuli raved like a madman, tore his beard and beat his head against the wall, but all to no purpose, for shortly afterwards Fatima breathed her last.

As soon as Thiuli heard that she was really dead he ordered her to be taken away to the burial place, for he could not bear having a dead person in the house. The servants who bore her there did but place her on the ground and run away, for they heard such dismal sighs and groans that they were afraid. Of course it was Mustapha who had frightened the servants, and as soon as they were out of the way he came out from his hiding place and examined the girl he supposed to be his sister. What was his horror to find that the girl who lay in the death-like trance bore no resemblance to Fatima whatever, but was a complete stranger.

When he had a little recovered from his disappointment he reflected it would be cruel to leave the poor girl in the state she was in, and so he uncorked the phial he had brought containing the antidote and poured the medicine down her throat. At once she opened her eyes and began to breathe freely, but it was some little time before she could

remember where she was and what had happened; but when she did she flung herself at Mustapha's feet and thanked him for having rescued her from her horrible

He poured the medicine down her throat (P. 48.)

captivity. Mustapha questioned her as to how it chanced that he had saved her instead of his sister Fatima.

She looked at him for some moments in surprise.

"Now I begin to understand to what chance I owe my deliverance," she said at length. "Since I have been in Thiuli's house I have been called Fatima, which I understand is your sister's name."

After some little conversation Mustapha discovered that Fatima and Zoraida were in the palace, but that, according to Thiuli's custom, he had given them new names when they became his property, and they were now called Mirza and Nurmahal.

Fatima, the rescued slave, could not but see how disappointed Mustapha was that he had failed in his attempt to carry off his sister, and she did all she could to encourage him to make a further effort, telling him that she had a plan which might prove successful.

So Mustapha took heart and questioned her as to how he should set about his task.

"I have been a slave in Thiuli's house for the last five months," she said, "and from the first day thought out a means of escape, but it was too difficult to carry out unaided. In the inner courtyard you may have noticed a fine fountain, which casts its water on high from no less than ten different jets. Now there was a similar fountain in my father's garden, which was fed by water conducted to it by an underground passage, and I wished to find out if Thiuli's fountain was supplied in a similar manner. So one day I began to praise it to Thiuli and to say what a clever builder he must have had to design it. 'I designed it myself,' said he, well pleased, 'and what you see is not the most wonderful part about

it, for the water has to be brought here from a distance of a thousand feet at least. I had a lofty arched underground passage built from my courtyard to a brook and I had the waters of the brook turned into this passage, through which it now flows and supplies my fountain with water. I designed and superintended the building of the whole thing myself.'

After hearing this I longed for the strength of a man that I might be able to raise one of the stones in the courtyard, reach the underground passage, and be free. I can show you the direction in which this passage lies and by it you can one night obtain entrance to the palace; but you will need one or two men to assist you, for you will have to overpower the black slaves who keep watch over the quarters where the women slaves are kept."

In spite of the fact that he had already had two failures Mustapha once more took heart, trusting that Allah would allow him to carry out successfully the plan of Fatima the slave girl. He promised her that he would arrange for her to reach her own home when he had rescued the others, as a reward for lending him her assistance in gaining an entrance to the palace.

His principal anxiety was how he should obtain the assistance of two or three men. Suddenly he remembered Orbasan's dagger and the promise the Robber Chief had made that he would come to his aid if ever he were in need of help.

So he made haste to leave the burial place and, taking Fatima with him, returned to the town in which he had purchased his physician's disguise, and

placed the girl in the charge of a poor but respectable woman.

Then, with the last of Orbasan's money he bought a horse, and set out once more for the robber's dwelling place. He reached it in three days' time, and, although an unexpected guest, was none the less a welcome one.

He told Orbasan of his unsuccessful attempts to rescue his sister, and in spite of the gravity of the situation Orbasan could not refrain from laughing as he pictured his friend decked out as the physician Chakamankabudibaba. But he was enraged to hear of the treachery of the dwarf, and vowed he would hang him with his own hands, as soon as he could catch him. He promised Mustapha that as soon as he was rested and refreshed he would return with him and help him to carry out his designs.

Accordingly on the following morning, Mustapha and Orbasan, accompanied by three of the latter's bravest men, set out for the little town where Mustapha had left the rescued Fatima. They rode so fast that they reached it in two days' time and, calling for Fatima, who was to show them the way, rode on to a little wood not far from Thiuli's palace. Here they hid themselves until nightfall and then Fatima led the way to the brook which supplied the fountain. Very soon they found the entrance to the underground passage and prepared to descend. One of the men was left in charge of Fatima and the horses, and the rescued slave repeated her directions—They were to traverse the passage until they came to the pipes which supplied

Mustapha and the rescued girls slipped through the opening
(P. 55.)

the fountain; having raised one of the flag-stones they would find themselves in the inner courtyard. They would see two towers to right and left of them and, passing through the sixth door from the right hand tower, they would come into the room where the real Fatima and Zoraida were shut up, watched by two black slaves.

So, well-armed and carrying crowbars with them, Mustapha, Orbasan, and two other men climbed down

into the underground passage. The water in the passage reached to their middles, but they were nevertheless able to move briskly forward. In half an hour's time they had reached the end of the passage, immediately below the fountain, and then they began to use their crow-bars. The stone-work was thick and very strong, but the efforts of the four men at length succeeded in forcing an opening sufficiently large for a man to crawl through.

Orbasan crept through first and gave a hand to the others, and when they all four stood in the court-yard they gazed around them in order to determine which of the doors was the one described to them.

But they were somewhat perplexed, for on counting from the right hand tower they found that one door had been walled up, and they were not sure whether Fatima had meant them to count this door or not.

But Orbasan did not hesitate long. "My good sword can open any door for me," he said, and advanced towards the one he imagined to be the right one.

On opening the door they discovered six black slaves lying fast asleep. They would have retreated silently, as they saw they had come to the wrong door, but a figure in the corner raised itself, and a well-known voice began to shriek for help. It was the little dwarf from Orbasan's camp.

But before the black slaves knew what was happening Orbasan had seized the little man; tearing his girdle into pieces he stuffed part of it down his throat, and with the rest he tied his hands behind his back, then he turned his attention to the slaves, several of whom had been bound and gagged by

Mustapha and the two robbers; in a few moments they were completely overpowered, but were told their lives would be spared on condition that they told where Mirza and Nurmahal were to be found.

They confessed that they were in the adjoining room, and on Mustapha hurrying in he found both Fatima and Zoraida, who had been awakened by the noise.

Hurriedly snatching up their jewels and their clothing they followed Mustapha out of the palace. The robbers wished to take some plunder with them, but Orbasan forbade it, declaring that it should never be said of Orbasan that he broke into houses by night like a common thief.

Mustapha and the rescued girls slipped through the opening in the courtyard into the underground passage, Orbasan promising to follow him immediately, but before doing so he and one of the robbers took the little dwarf and, leading him into the courtyard, hanged him with a silken rope, which they had brought expressly for the purpose, to the topmost point of the fountain.

Having so punished the treachery of the wretched little creature, they also got down into the watercourse and followed Mustapha and the girls.

Fatima and Zoraida, with tears in their eyes, would have thanked their noble rescuer for having saved them from a miserable existence, but he bade them waste no time on words, for it was quite likely that Thiuli-Kos would, before long, discover his loss and pursue them.

It was with a deep feeling of gratitude that, on

the following day, Mustapha and the girls bade Orbasan farewell, vowing that they would never forget him. Fatima, the girl who had been first rescued, was carefully disguised, and then sent to Balsora and put on board a boat which would carry her to her own home.

After a short and most successful voyage Mustapha and the two girls arrived home, and the joy of the old Cadi to see his dearly-loved daughter once again was beyond all expression.

He gave a great feast to which he invited all his relations and friends, to whom he made Mustapha relate all his adventures.

When he had finished speaking the Cadi solemnly revoked the curse he had put upon his son's head, and taking Zoraida's hand he placed it in that of Mustapha. "Take her," he said, "as a reward for your unwearied perseverance, and take also the blessing of your aged father, whose earnest wish is that our city may never lack men who, like you, combine tender brotherly affection with wisdom and perseverance."

THE STORY OF LITTLE MOUK

Little Mouk

IN Nicea, which is my native place, there once lived a little man, named Mouk. I remember him very well indeed, although I was but a youngster at the time, for I once received a good sound thrashing from my father on his account.

In spite of the fact that he was already an old man, he was but three or four feet in height, and presented a most extraordinary appearance, for although his body was small and delicate he carried a head upon his shoulders that was larger than that of any full-grown man.

He lived quite by himself and did all his own work. Had it not been for the fact that every mid-day the smoke rose in thick volumes from his chimney, folks would scarcely have known if he were alive or dead, for he left his house but once in four weeks. It is true that he walked up and down upon

the flat roof of his house most evenings, but he was so short that his body could not be seen, and so the story got about that it was his head alone which promenaded upon the house-top.

I am afraid that I and my playmates were bad boys who loved to tease and worry anyone we could, and we reckoned it rare fun when the time came round for little Mouk to take his monthly walk abroad. We waited outside his house for him, and as soon as his big head, surmounted by an enormous turban, appeared, we threw our caps in the air and shouted for joy. The head and turban always came out first, and the tiny little body which followed was clad in a shabby little cloak, wide trousers and a broad girdle; attached to the latter was a long dagger, so much out of proportion to the size of his body that it was difficult to tell at a first glance whether Mouk was fastened to the dagger or the dagger to him.

In spite of the fact that we naughty boys danced round him like young maniacs, Mouk always bowed to us with great gravity, and walked down the street with a dignified air, dragging his poor little feet, encased in huge loose slippers, laboriously after him.

We had made up a little rhyme which we sang as we danced around him. It was as follows:

"Little Mouk, we know you well,
In a great big house you dwell,
Only once a month you go
For a walk with footsteps slow.
Though you're but a dwarf, 'tis said,
You've a mountain for a head,
Turn around and take a look,
Run and catch us, little Mouk."

I am ashamed to say I was one of the worst of the tormentors of the poor little man. I would twitch his cloak, and once I went behind him and trod on his huge slipper, thus causing him to fall. This seemed a fine joke to me; but I ceased to laugh, when I saw him turn towards my father's house. He went in and remained there some time. I hid myself behind the door and watched until he came out again.

He was accompanied by my father, who held his hand and bowed repeatedly and most respectfully to him as he took his leave.

I must confess that I felt very uneasy upon seeing this and remained a long time in my hiding place, but at length hunger, which I disliked even worse than a thrashing, forced me to come out, and I stole into my father's presence, shame-faced and with bowed head.

"I hear you have been playing your pranks upon the good little Mouk," said my father in stern tones. "I am now about to tell you his story, after which I am quite sure you will never wish to mock and annoy him again; but first I must punish you for the offence you have committed, in the usual way."

The usual way meant five-and-twenty strokes with the stem of his long pipe. Having unscrewed the amber mouth-piece, he used it to give me the sound thrashing I so richly deserved.

He did not spare me a single stroke, but when he had finished he ordered me to pay attention whilst he related the story of Little Mouk.

"The father of little Mouk, whose real name is Mukrah, was a highly respected, though poor man, who also lived here in Nicea.

"He was almost as much of a hermit as his son is. Unfortunately he could not bring himself to love his son, for he was ashamed of his dwarfish figure, and consequently he would not have him educated.

"Little Mouk was still but a merry child when he had reached the age of sixteen years, and his father, who was a stern man, scolded him frequently for being so foolish and full of tricks when he had passed the age of childhood.

"But one day the old man had a bad fall and hurt himself so much that he died, leaving poor ignorant little Mouk to fight his way in the world as best he could.

"His unkind relations, who had lent the dead man money which he would now never be able to repay them, turned the poor little fellow out of doors, advising him to seek his fortune abroad.

"Little Mouk expressed himself as quite ready for his travels; but begged that he might be allowed to take his father's clothes with him, and to this they consented.

"Now his father had been a fine tall man, so the clothes did not fit little Mouk, but this did not worry him. He cut them down in length and put them on, quite forgetting that they required taking in in the width as well. This is the reason of his extraordinary appearance, for the large turban, the broad girdle, the wide trousers and the blue mantle are

all heirlooms of his father, which he has always worn.

"The dagger, too, was his father's; this he stuck in the girdle when he set out upon his way, with his staff in hand.

"Happy and well content he wandered along. If he spied a piece of broken glass glittering in the sunshine, he put it in his pocket believing it was a diamond.

"If he saw the distant cupolas of a mosque shining like fire, or the sea stretched before him as smooth as a mirror, he hurried along thinking for sure he was coming to an enchanted country. But alas! the magic pictures changed as he approached them, and all too soon his weariness and empty stomach reminded him that he was still in the land of mortals.

"Thus he wandered on for two whole days and nights, hungry, weary, and dejected, in search of a fortune he began to fear he would never find. The wild fruits were his only food and the hard earth was his bed. On the third morning, from the top of a high hill, he saw a large town.

"He could see the glittering crescent and bright coloured flags upon the roofs and it seemed to little Mouk that they beckoned him nearer. He stood a few moments watching the town and its surroundings in surprise. 'There will little Mouk make his fortune if anywhere,' he said, and in spite of his fatigue he jumped for joy, then summoning all his strength he began to walk towards the city. But although it appeared so close he

did not reach it until mid-day, for his poor little legs almost refused their office, so that he was obliged to rest frequently in the shade of a palm tree. But at length he reached the city gate. He shook out his mantle, re-arranged his turban, spread out his girdle and set his dagger jauntily in it, then, wiping the dust from his shoes, he strode bravely into the city.

"He had wandered through several streets, but nowhere had a door been opened to him, nowhere had the folks called out to him as he had imagined they would: 'Come in, little Mouk, come in, eat, drink, and rest your weary little legs.'

"But as he glanced longingly at a fine large house opposite him, a window opened and an old woman popped her head out and began calling out in sing-song tones:

"'Come everyone,
The food is done,
Decked is the cloth,
Come taste the broth,
Ye neighbours all
Come to my call!'

The house-door opened and little Mouk saw many cats and dogs enter. He stood a moment in doubt as to whether he should answer the invitation, but at length he took courage and went in. A pair of young cats trotted along before him and he decided to follow them, guessing they knew the way to the kitchen better than he did.

"When Mouk reached the top of the staircase he saw the old woman who had looked out of the

window. She looked at him sulkily and asked what he wanted—'I heard you inviting everyone to partake of your food,' answered little Mouk, 'and came in too, because I was so hungry.'

"The old woman laughed: "Where do you come from, you queer little fellow?' she asked. 'Why, everyone in the town knows that I only cook for my beloved cats, and now and again I invite a few guests to feast with them, as you saw just now.' Little Mouk told what a hard lot his had been since his father's death and begged her to let him partake of her cats' food for once. The old woman seemed pleased with the truthfulness of the little fellow and gave him a plentiful supply of food and drink.

"When he had satisfied his hunger the old woman looked at him for some time and then said: 'Little Mouk, would you like to enter my service? If you would you shall have little trouble and be well paid for your work.'

"Little Mouk, who had enjoyed the cats' broth, consented, and entered the service of Madame Ahavzi. His work was light but very curious.

"Madam Ahavzi had in all six cats, and little Mouk was expected to brush their fur and anoint them with sweet-smelling essences. When their mistress was out he had to take charge of them. When they took their meals it was his task to set the dishes before them, and at night he was expected to put them to bed on silken cushions and cover them with velvet coverlets.

"There were also several little dogs in the

house for him to take care of; but there was not so much fuss made over them as over the cats, which Madam Ahavzi treated as her own children.

"On the whole Mouk's life was as solitary as it had been in his father's house, for besides the old woman he saw no living creature but the cats and dogs.

"For some time all went well and little Mouk had plenty to eat and little to do, and the old woman was quite pleased and contented with him, but by-and-by the cats were naughty. When the old woman went out they jumped about the room, upset all manner of things and broke one or two valuable ornaments which happened to be in their way. But the moment they heard the old woman's step on the stairs they crept back to their cushions and waved their tails to and fro as though nothing had happened.

"Madam Ahavzi flew into a violent rage when she saw what a state the room was in and laid the blame on Mouk, and it was useless for him to excuse himself; she believed her innocent-looking cats rather than her servant.

"Little Mouk was very sad to think that his misfortunes had overtaken him again and he determined to quit his mistress' service.

"But as he had discovered on his first journey that it is very unpleasant to be without money, he determined to try and help himself to wages, which his mistress had always promised but never yet given him. There was a room in the house which was always kept locked and the interior of which he had

never seen, but he had often heard the old woman in it, and dearly wished to know what was hidden there. As he now sat wondering where the money for his journey was to come from, it occurred to him that the closed room might contain the old woman's treasures, but alas! the door was locked and he was unable to get in.

"One morning, when Madam Ahavzi had gone out, one of the little dogs, which had never been treated very kindly by her, but which little Mouk had petted and paid great attention to, came and pulled his wide trousers and made signs to Mouk to follow him.

"Mouk, who had always been fond of playing with the little dog, followed it, and it led him into the bedroom of his mistress and showed him a little door he had never seen before. The door was ajar, and Mouk entering found himself in the room he had so long wished to enter. He peered about in every corner to see if he could find any money, but all in vain. Nothing but old clothes and strangely-shaped vases were lying about. One of these attracted his attention, for it was of crystal and had a number of beautiful figures engraved upon it. He took it up to examine it, but alas, to his horror, it had a cover which he had not noticed and which slipped off and broke into a thousand pieces.

"For some moments he was rooted to the spot with terror. His fate was now decided, for if he did not run away he was quite certain the old woman would kill him. He took a glance

around to see which of the old woman's possessions would be most useful to him upon his journey. Seeing an enormous pair of slippers, he made up his mind to take them, for his own shoes were worn out; moreover it was quite certain that with the big slippers on, no one could accuse him of still standing in his childhood's shoes, so he quickly exchanged shoes, took a fine walking stick, which had a handle carved in the form of a lion's head, and going to his own room donned the turban and cloak that had been his father's, and left the house and town as fast as his legs could carry him. Once outside the town he still continued running, for he was afraid the old woman would overtake and punish him; but at length he grew very weary, for his little body had to support such a large head that he was soon overcome with fatigue. But when he would have stopped he could not, the big shoes kept urging him on, and he guessed at length they must be magic shoes. He did not know how to prevent them dragging him along, but, driven to despair, he cried out, as though to a pair

Seeing an enormous pair of slippers, he made up his mind to take them (P. 66.)

of restive horses, 'Stop, stop, oh! stop,' and the slippers immediately stopped and Mouk threw himself upon the ground quite worn out.

"He was delighted with the slippers, for, after all, he felt he had gained something for his work which would probably assist him on in the world and help him to make his fortune. But in spite of his pleasure fatigue overcame him and he fell asleep and dreamt. In his dream the little dog, which had assisted him in obtaining the slippers, appeared to him and said, 'Dear Mouk, you do not seem to quite understand the use of the slippers. Turn round on the heel, when you have them on, three times, and you will then be able to fly wherever you please. With the little stick you will be able to find treasure, for wherever gold is buried it will strike the earth three times and where silver is buried twice.' Such was little Mouk's dream, and when he awoke he determined to make a trial in order to discover if the dream had any truth in it. He put on the slippers and, lifting one foot in the air, turned round on the heel of the other. But it was a difficult task and the poor little fellow's enormous head dragged him sometimes this way and sometimes the other, so that he fell over two or three times before he finally succeeded. But succeed he did, and then, wishing himself to be transported to the nearest town, he found himself raised in the air and flying through the clouds like the wind, and before he could grasp what was happening he was in a market place, where many booths had been set up and where innumerable people were running to and fro.

"He went in and out among them, but presently decided to seek a quieter street, for in the crowded market folks constantly trod upon his big slippers and nearly threw him down, or else his long dagger stuck into the people and he then had some difficulty in avoiding the blows rained upon him.

"Little Mouk now began to set his wits to work as to how he was to earn a piece of money. It is true that he had a staff which could discover hidden treasure, but where could he find a place all in a moment where gold and silver lay hidden?

"He might have exhibited himself in a booth and received money for it, but was too proud to do so. Then it struck him his swift running might be the means of earning him a livelihood and decided to offer his services as a courier.

"Thinking it likely that the king might pay the highest sum for such service, he enquired the way to the palace.

"By the palace gateway stood a guard, who asked what he wanted. Upon replying that he wished for work he was sent to the overseer of the slaves. He repeated his request, adding that he wished for a post amongst the royal messengers. The overseer looked him all over from head to foot and said, 'How is it possible that you with your tiny little limbs, scarcely a span long, could become a courier? Away with you, I am not here to waste my time with fools.'

"But little Mouk assured him he was not joking and offered to run a race for a wager with their swiftest runner.

"The overseer was amused, and told him to hold himself in readiness to run a race that very evening, then, taking him into the kitchen, he ordered him to be supplied with plenty to eat and drink.

He found himself flying through the clouds (P. 67.)

"Then he went into the king's presence and told him about the funny little man and the request he had made.

"The king was a merry gentleman and was there-

fore well pleased that little Mouk had been kept to make a joke for him.

"He ordered stands to be set up in a large meadow behind the palace, so that the racing could be viewed in comfort by all the royal household, and he also said that the greatest care was to be taken of the dwarf.

"The king told the prince and princess of the spectacle that was to be provided for their entertainment, they told their servants, and so, as the evening approached, everyone was in a state of pleased expectancy and everyone that had a leg to stand upon was hurrying to the meadow to see the boastful dwarf run a race.

"When the king and his sons and daughters had taken their seats, little Mouk appeared and made a deep obeisance to the distinguished company.

"A shout of merriment greeted the uncouth little figure, for the people had never seen such a sight before.

"The little body, surmounted by the huge head, and clothed in the mantle, the wide trousers, the long dagger stuck in the broad girdle, and the tiny feet in the big slippers, oh! altogether he looked too funny for anything, and roar after roar of laughter went up.

"But Mouk was not in the least put out by the laughter. He stood leaning proudly upon his little staff and waited for his adversary. The overseer of the slaves, according to Mouk's request, had selected the very best runner in the kingdom, and he now

stepped forward and placed himself beside the little man and both awaited the signal to start. Then the Princess Amarza waved her veil, which was the signal for the start agreed upon, and, like two arrows aimed at the same target, the runners shot forward across the meadow.

"Mouk's adversary had the advantage to begin with; but the little man, arrayed in the magic slippers, soon overtook him, passed him, and reached the winning post long before the other came in, gasping for breath.

"The spectators were at first too much overcome with surprise and admiration to give vent to applause, but no sooner did the king commence to clap his hands than the whole multitude followed his example and shouted—'Bravo, little Mouk, long life to the winner of the race.'

"When little Mouk was brought before the king he bowed to him and said: 'Sire, I have given you a small proof of what I am able to accomplish, I pray you now grant me a position as courier to your Majesty.'

"'Your request is granted,' replied the king. 'Not only shall you be one of my couriers, but I will grant you a place near my own person and you shall receive a yearly wage of a hundred gold pieces.'

"Mouk now thought his fortune must surely be made. From that time he was employed constantly by the king to undertake all messages of importance and secrecy, and as he performed his duties with conscientiousness and speed he continued to gain the

king's favour. But the king's courtiers were all jealous of him, for they could not bear that their master should prefer a dwarf to them, and they made many plans to oust him from the royal favour, none of which succeeded.

"It grieved little Mouk that he should be the object of their anger and he made up his mind to perform some act of kindness to them which would reconcile them to him. It was then he remembered his staff, and he thought to himself that if he could discover a hidden treasure that would probably benefit them all, he would surely endear himself to them.

"So whenever he went out he took his staff in his hand, for he remembered to have heard that the father of the present king had buried a great deal of his treasure and had died before he could manage to tell his son where it was hidden.

"One evening chance led him into a part of the palace gardens that was but seldom used, and suddenly he felt his staff strike the ground three times. He knew well what that betokened and so, drawing his dagger from his girdle, he cut signs in the neighbouring trees, so that he might recognise the spot again, returned to the castle, and, as soon as night fell, went back to the spot carrying a spade with him.

"The little dwarf had set himself a weary task, for his arms were weak and the spade was heavy, and he dug for a couple of hours at least before he felt the spade strike against some metal. Jumping into the hole he had dug he found he had unearthed a pot full of golden coins. He was not strong enough

THE STORY OF LITTLE MOUK

"He had unearthed a pot full of golden coins" (p. 72)

to lift the pot from the earth, but he filled his pockets with as many coins as he could carry and the next day, thinking to please his servants and companions, he distributed the money liberally amongst them.

"Alas! poor little Mouk, he had better have run off with it and left the kingdom, for now he did but rouse their envy.

"One declared he must be a magician, another said he had helped himself from the king's treasures, for a sum of money had lately been missing, and they one and all agreed that they would conspire together and see if they could not deprive him of the king's favour.

"So one day the cup-bearer, who was a particular enemy of Mouk's entered the king's presence and begged to know how he had offended his royal master.

"The king looked at him in astonishment. 'You have not offended me,' said he, 'I don't understand what you are talking about.'

"'Oh pardon me, your Majesty,' said the man, 'but do you not load the dwarf Mouk with treasures, whilst to me you have not given a single gold piece?'

"The king was surprised, for he knew he had given Mouk no money; but the treasurer who was present, and who had cause to know that certain sums were missing from the treasury, added his story to that of the cup-bearer.

"They told the king that Mouk always had more money than he knew how to spend, and the

treasurer suggested that Mouk had stolen it from his royal master.

"So the king ordered spies to be set to watch the little man in order that they might try and catch him in the act of stealing.

"The following night little Mouk, who had generously given away all his money, stole out to the garden with his staff and spade to find more treasure.

"It was not long before he discovered another pot of gold, and had just uncovered it and begun to fill his mantle with coins, when his enemies fell upon him, bound him hand and foot, and led him before the king. They unearthed the pot of gold and carried that with them too.

"The king was not in a very good temper, for he had been awakened from his sleep, and so his poor little courier got a very bad reception.

"The wicked men who had caught Mouk now began to accuse him of having stolen the pot of money, declaring they caught him in the act of burying it in the earth. The king asked the accused what he had to say for himself, and bade him tell how he came by so much money.

"Little Mouk, knowing his own innocence, told the king boldly that he had found the pot in the garden and that he had been digging it out, not burying it.

"All present laughed loudly at the impudence of the little dwarf in making such a foolish excuse. But the king was furious. 'You wretched little thief,' he cried, 'how dare you lie to me in this barefaced

manner, after having robbed me, too.' Then he asked his treasurer if it were true that a sum such as had been found with the dwarf really were missing from the treasury.

"Of course the treasurer declared that not only that sum, but more still had been missing, from time to time, and that he was absolutely certain that it had been stolen.

The king commanded that little Mouk should be heavily chained and shut up in a prison in the tower, and the king bade the treasurer carry the pot of gold away and count it carefully and put it back into the treasury.

"The dishonest man carried the pot home and counted out the gold, and when he came to the bottom of the pot he found a paper on which was written:—

"' An enemy has over-run my land and I am forced to bury my treasures. Whoever finds this must carry it to my son or else the curse of a king will rest upon him—Signed, King Said.'

"This paper the treasurer did *not* show to his master.

"Poor little Mouk was in sad straits and wearied his brain trying to think of a way out of his trouble.

"He knew that to rob the king was usually punished by death, and yet he could not make up his mind to tell the secret of his magic slippers and staff, guessing rightly that they would probably be taken from him. His slippers were of no use to him now, for he was chained closely to the wall, and

think as he would he could hit upon no plan by means of which he could escape.

"The following day, however, he was informed that sentence of death had been passed upon him, and he made up his mind that as the magic staff would certainly be of no benefit to him when he was dead, he might as well sacrifice it to save his head. So he asked to be allowed to speak in private to the king and then told him the secret.

"The king had little faith in the story, but he decided to put Mouk to the proof and, unknown to the dwarf, a sum of money was buried in the earth. Mouk was released and shortly afterwards had found the money, for the staff struck the ground three times just over the spot where it was buried. The king knew now that his treasurer had deceived him, and sent him a silken rope, as a hint that if he did not hang himself, he would promptly be seized and led to the gallows, for monarchs in the Eastern countries show their erring servants scant mercy.

"Now the king had promised to spare Mouk's life if he could prove his innocence; but having discovered the secret of the staff, he began to suspect that there was some magic connected with the marvellous running powers the little man possessed, and so he declared that, unless Mouk instantly disclosed the secret, though he would spare his life, as he had promised, Mouk would be sent to perpetual imprisonment.

"Little Mouk, who had had enough of prison life during the short time he had been shut up in the tower, confessed that his speed had nothing to

The king slipped into the shoes and commenced running round the garden (P. 79.)

do with himself, but was given him by the magic slippers. He did not, however, tell him the secret of turning round on his heel three times.

"The king slipped into the shoes and commenced running round the garden like mad. He ran and ran until he was exhausted, for little Mouk could not deny himself this small revenge and did not tell him how to make the shoes cease running,

and so the king went on and on until he fell down in a faint.

"As soon as the king regained consciousness he commenced to abuse little Mouk in no measured terms. 'I promise you life and pardon,' said he, 'but unless you are out of my kingdom in less than twelve hours, I will go back upon my word and have you hanged.'

"He then walked off, carrying little Mouk's magic shoes and wand with him, and these he shut up at once in his treasure chamber.

"As for the poor little fellow, he went out of the country just as poor as he came into it, blaming his own folly in having supposed he was suited to life at court.

"As the country he had been in was not of very vast dimensions he found himself upon the borders of it within a week, but after having been used to the magic shoes he found it very troublesome to be obliged to walk.

"Once across the border little Mouk sought out the woods and took up his abode in the most solitary and forsaken situation he could find, for he was tired of the ways of men and wished to dwell alone.

"He threw himself down upon the soft green grass beside a clear brooklet, in the waters of which were reflected the green fig trees which grew in abundance upon the bank. He made up his mind that he would never taste any food again, for he thought he was tired of life and wished to die. However, he fell asleep, and when he awoke he felt so terribly hungry that he decided that death by starv-

ation would not be a pleasant one and got up to search for something to eat.

"Delicious ripe figs hung upon the tree beneath which he had fallen asleep and he climbed up it and plucked some fruit. It tasted so good that he had a fine feast, and then climbed down in order to take a drink of water from the stream, but what was his horror when he saw his reflection in the water, for his head was adorned with two enormous ears, and a huge, long, thick nose. He put up his hands to his ears, they were a foot long at least.

"'It is meet that I should wear asses' ears,' he cried, 'for like an ass have I trampled my good fortune beneath my feet.'

"He wandered to and fro beneath the trees for a long time, until he again felt so hungry that he had no resource but to help himself to some more figs, for there was no other kind of fruit to be had. He plucked the fruit from a different tree, however.

"Having finished his meal, it occurred to him that he might try and tuck his great unsightly ears beneath his turban, but when he put up his hands to touch them they had dwindled down again to their ordinary size.

"He ran to the brook and looked in, and to his great joy discovered that both long ears and huge nose had disappeared.

"He now came to the conclusion that it was the fruit from the first tree which had caused his affliction, and the fruit from the second tree had cured him, and he recognised the fact with joy that he had once more the means placed in his hands to bring him good

fortune. He therefore plucked from both trees as much fruit as he was able to carry and began to retrace his steps towards the country he had so shortly left.

"In the first town he came to he took care to obtain a disguise, which he put on, and then made his way towards the city where the king's palace was. It happened to be just the time of year when fruit was scarce, and Mouk seated himself by the palace gateway, where he knew the steward of the royal kitchens came every day to buy delicacies from the country people who went there to sell their wares.

"He had not sat long before he saw the steward coming across the courtyard. He looked at the wares spread out for his inspection and presently his eye chanced to light upon Mouk's basket of figs. 'Ah!' said he, 'fruit is scarce just now, and his Majesty is very fond of it! What will you take for the basketful?'

"Little Mouk named a reasonable sum and the bargain was soon completed. The steward gave the basket to one of the slaves who accompanied him and went on his way, and little Mouk lost no time in making off, for he knew as soon as the figs he had sold were eaten the king would discover the misfortune that had overtaken him and would search for and punish the dealer who had been the cause of it.

"The king was in great good humour that day, for his dinner had pleased him particularly well and he praised the steward for his excellent catering, but the steward, who had kept the figs back as a sur-

prise, smiled knowingly and quoted several wise saws—'All's well that ends well,' 'A fine evening may sometimes follow a dull day,' and so on, until the

"Good gracious, Father," cried the Princess, "whatever is the matter with you?" (P. 84.)

princesses, becoming curious, questioned him eagerly as to what he had still to set before them.

"Then with a smile of triumph he set the figs upon the table.

"There was a general exclamation of 'Oh!' from everyone seated round.

"'What delicious-looking fruit,' cried the king. 'How ripe, how luscious! Steward, you have indeed proved yourself to be a first-rate fellow.'

"As he spoke he drew the dish of fruit towards him and began dealing out the dainty with a sparing hand, for he was inclined to be a little greedy.

"To the princes and princesses he gave two each, but the ladies-in-waiting and the courtiers received but one a-piece, and then the king set himself to finish the fruit left over.

"'Good gracious, father,' cried the Princess Amarza suddenly, 'whatever is the matter with you? You look most peculiar.'

"Everyone stared at the king in astonishment, for he had a couple of enormous ears and a great big nose that stretched far beyond his chin. Next they all began to look at one another in horror and surprise for, more or less, according to the quantity of fruit they had eaten, were they adorned with large nose and ears.

"Imagine the consternation that took possession of the whole court!

"From far and near doctors were sent for, and they ordered all sorts of pills and draughts, but without avail—they could not reduce the size of the noses end ears of the victims, and even an operation upon one of the princes failed, for no sooner were his nose and ears cut off than they grew again.

"Mouk heard from his hiding place the news of the great disaster that had overtaken the court, and deemed that the time had come for him to bargain. With the money he had obtained for the

figs he had purchased a fresh disguise, and now, clad in black robes and wearing a long white beard of goat's hairs, he approached the palace and introduced himself as a foreign doctor of repute, and offered his services to relieve the king and his court of their strange encumbrances.

"At first no one paid much heed to him, but one of the princes, having eaten one of the figs he brought as an antidote, speedily felt his nose and ears resume their original size, so then everyone came thronging round him to be cured.

"Last of all came the king, and, taking him by the hand, led him into his treasure-chamber and bade him choose whatever he would if he would only free him from the shameful calamity that had overtaken him.

"These words fell like tones of sweetest music upon Mouk's ears, for he had already spied his slippers and little magic staff upon the floor of the treasure-chamber. He walked about admiring the various treasures until the king was off his guard, when Mouk slipped his feet into the slippers and grasped the magic staff. Then, tearing the false beard from his face, he allowed the king's gaze to rest upon the well-known features of his little courier.

"'Faithless king,' cried Mouk, 'you who repay faithful service with ingratitude, take as a well-deserved punishment the deformity that you bear. Your long ears and nose will remind you daily of little Mouk.'

"As he spoke he wheeled round quickly upon his heel and at the third turn he wished himself far

away, and before the king had time to call for help Mouk had disappeared.

"Since then the little man has lived here in our town, but he keeps himself aloof from his fellow-men, because he has learnt to despise mankind. Experience has made him a wise man, and his wisdom calls for your respect and admiration, even though his appearance may happen to be somewhat extraordinary."

This is the story as my father told it to me. I expressed my sorrow and repentance for having so plagued the good little man, and my father gave me another thrashing to keep me from forgetting my manners in future.

I told my playmates the wonderful story of little Mouk and they agreed with me that we would never tease or annoy him any more. In time we came to love and reverence him to such a degree that we vied with each other in paying him every token of respect.

THE STORY OF THE FALSE PRINCE

Labakan

THERE was once a worthy tailor's apprentice named Labakan, who was learning his trade from a clever master at Alexandria.

No one could accuse the young man of being awkward in plying his needle, on the contrary he worked very well indeed. Neither was he at all lazy, and yet there was certainly something wrong with him, for though at times he would sit and sew for hours at such a rate that his needle became red-hot, yet another time, and this occurred pretty frequently, too, he sat wrapped in thought, staring before him with unseeing eyes, and having altogether such a very singular appearance, that his master and his fellow apprentices would nudge each other and say: "Labakan is putting on his grand airs again."

On Friday, when other folk were returning quietly homewards to their work after their prayers,

Labakan strutted out from the mosque, decked in fine clothes, which had cost him a good deal of trouble to procure, and paraded himself through the streets and squares of the city. When any of his companions met him and saluted him with: "Peace be with thee," or "How is it with thee to-day, friend Labakan?" he would merely reply by a wave of the hand, or a dignified nod. Sometimes his master would say to him in a joke: "What a fine prince you would make, to be sure, Labakan." Then, instead of seeing he was being laughed at, he would be delighted and replied—"So you have noticed that too, my master? I have long thought so myself."

And so the foolish apprentice would go on, but his master put up with his nonsense because he was not only a very clever workman, but a good fellow too.

But one day the Sultan's brother Selim, who happened to be travelling through Alexandria, sent a robe to Labakan's master to have some slight alteration made. The work was given to Labakan, because his work was finer than that of any of the other apprentices.

In the evening, when the master and the men had all gone home to enjoy a little well-earned rest and amusement after the labours of the day, an irresistible longing drew Labakan back to the workshop, for he wished to feast his eyes upon the Prince Selim's robe.

For some time he stood before it admiring the gold embroidery and the brilliant colours of the silk and velvet, until at length he could resist no

longer and put it on. It fitted him exactly as though it had been made for him. "Do I not make as fine a prince as Selim?" he asked himself, strutting backwards and forwards across the room. "How often has the master himself told me that I was born to be a prince!"

With the royal robe Labakan seemed also to have assumed a royal mood and he began really to persuade himself that he must be a king's son in disguise, and he therefore decided to leave the place, where the people all seemed too stupid to recognise his worth. It seemed to him as though the splendid robe had been sent to him by some good fairy and to be too precious a gift to be despised, and so, putting the little money he possessed into his pockets, he slipped through the gates of Alexandria, his flight being covered by the darkness of the night. The new prince caused a good deal of surprise amongst the people of the towns he passed through, for it was not usual to see a man so handsomely arrayed walking on foot, but on being questioned he would reply in dignified tones that he had his own reasons for so travelling. This, however, did not satisfy the folks, and when he found he was making a laughing-stock of himself, he spent part of his money in purchasing a broken-down old horse, which he obtained for a very small sum, and which suited him excellently, because its quiet pace called for little display of horsemanship and therefore did not betray the fact that he was an unskilful rider.

One day, as he rode carefully along upon old

Murva, as he had named his horse, he was joined by another rider, who requested permission to travel in his company, as converse made the time pass more pleasantly and quickly.

This rider was a cheery young fellow, and very good-looking. He questioned Labakan as to whence he came and whither he was going, and it appeared that he too was riding about at present merely for his own pleasure. He told his new friend that his name was Omar and that he was the nephew of Elfi Bey, the unfortunate Pasha of Cairo, and that his uncle had made a communication to him shortly before his death which would presently necessitate his taking a journey in a certain direction. Labakan was not quite so communicative as his companion, but he intimated that he came of very high parentage and was travelling for his own pleasure.

The two young men seemed mutually pleased with each other and on the second day Labakan had become sufficiently familiar with him to ask him what was the communication Elfi Bey had made to him, and was much surprised to hear the following: Elfi Bey had brought up Omar from his earliest youth and he had never known his own parents. But the Pasha, being defeated and mortally wounded by his enemies, thought the right time had now come to tell his adopted nephew that, instead of being his nephew, he was really the son of a mighty ruler, who had removed the young prince from his court on account of a prophecy the astrologers had made concerning him, and who

had declared he would not see his son again until his two-and-twentieth birthday.

Elfi Bey had not told him his father's name, but had given him minute instructions as to what he was to do. Upon the fourth day of the coming month of Ramadan, which was his birthday, he was to go to the celebrated Pillar of El-Serujah, four day's journey east of Alexandria. He would there find some men awaiting him, to whom he was to present a dagger, with the words, "I am he whom ye seek." The men would answer, "Praised be the Prophet who has preserved thee," and he was to follow them, for they would then lead him to his father. The tailor's apprentice was very much astonished to hear his companion's story and regarded him with envious eyes, inwardly raging over the fate which had first allowed Omar to pass for the nephew of a mighty pasha, and yet heaped still further dignity upon him by proving him to be a royal prince, whilst Labakan, though possessing all the attributes of a prince, came from humble origin and belonged to a common trade.

He was forced to confess that the young prince was of a pleasing countenance and possessed gentle and engaging manners, and yet in spite of that he tried to persuade himself that the young man's father would have preferred him, Labakan, for his son.

All day long he dwelt upon this and dreamt of its possibility at night, and when morning dawned and he looked upon the face of the unconscious youth, he determined to take by cunning what an unkind fate had denied him. The dagger which

was to establish the prince's identity was stuck in his girdle, and Labakan drew it out and placed it in his own, then, mounting the prince's fleeter steed, he rode off and was many miles away before the prince awoke and discovered the trick his perfidious companion had played him.

It was the first day of the month of Ramadan, and so Labakan had four days in which to reach the Pillar of El-Serujah, which was well known to him and which was only two days' journey; but he hurried on as fast as he could, because he feared the real prince would overtake him.

At the end of the second day he came in sight of the Pillar, which stood upon a little hill in the midst of a wide plain, and could be seen for some miles away.

Labakan's heart beat wildly and his guilty conscience made him afraid as to whether he might be able to carry out his intentions, but he comforted himself with the thought that he had been born to be a prince and rode on.

The neighbourhood of the Pillar of El-Serujah was uninhabited and desolate, and the new prince would have been in sad straits had it not been for his forethought in providing himself with food for several days, so he encamped beneath a palm tree, with his horse tethered beside him, and there awaited his fate.

Towards the middle of the following day he saw a great company of horses and camels advancing across the plain towards him. The company halted at the foot of the hill and pitched magni-

ficent tents, the whole giving the impression of being the escort of some powerful pasha or sheik.

Labakan guessed these were the men who had come to meet him, and would have liked to present their future ruler to them immediately, but suppressed his eagerness to take upon himself the rôle of prince, as the following day was to see the accomplishment of all his desires.

At the end of the second day he came in sight of the Pillar (P. 92.)

The morning sun awakened the overjoyed tailor to the most important moment of his life, for he was to be raised from his lowly position to the side of a royal father.

It is true that, as he saddled his horse and prepared to ride towards the Pillar, he could not but remember what a dishonest step he was about to take, and also what pain and grief he was bringing to the real prince in blighting all the hopes he had in life, but the die was cast and he could not undo what he had already done, and his love of self whispered to his heart that he was handsome and stately enough to be the son of the mightiest of kings.

Encouraged by this thought he sprang upon his horse and, summoning all the bravery he possessed,

ventured to urge his steed to a gallop, and in less than a quarter of an hour he was at the foot of the hill.

He dismounted and, drawing forth Prince Omar's dagger, began to climb the hill.

At the base of the Pillar stood six men, surrounding a grey-headed old man of noble and majestic appearance, who was glad in a magnificent caftan of pure gold wrapped around with a white cashmere shawl, a white turban glistening with diamonds, all of which betokened him to be a man of high estate and honour.

Labakan approached him, and, bowing before him, presented the dagger, with these words: "I am he whom you seek."

"Blessed be the Prophet who hath preserved thee," answered the old man, whilst tears of joy streamed down his face: "embrace thy father, my dear, dear son!"

The tailor had the grace to feel both touched and ashamed as the arms of the aged prince enfolded him.

But not for long was he to be left in undisturbed possession of his new position, for he soon perceived a rider hurrying across the plain towards them. Horse and rider presented a somewhat peculiar appearance, for whilst the animal appeared to be either unwilling or unable through fatigue to proceed further, the rider urged him forward with both hands and feet. Only too soon did Labakan recognise the pair as his horse Murva and the rightful prince; but he was desperate and determined to brazen it out.

The rider had been seen beckoning and making signs from a long way back, and now that, in spite of the wretched pace of his horse, he had reached the foot of the hill, he hastily dismounted and dashed up the hill. "Wait," he cried frantically, "wait, and do not let yourselves be deceived by the basest of impostors. I am Omar, and I will allow no one to misuse my name."

The spectators of this extraordinary scene were astounded, particularly the aged prince, who turned from one to the other of the two claimants in uncertainty. But Labakan turned to him and said in a voice of studied calmness—"Most gracious lord and father, do not allow yourself to be deceived, this man is but a mad tailor's apprentice, who deserves our pity rather than our anger."

These words well-nigh drove the prince crazy. Foaming with rage, he would have rushed upon Labakan had not the bystanders prevented him.

"You have spoken truly, my dear son," said the aged prince. "The poor man must indeed be mad. He shall be bound and placed upon one of the camels and perhaps later we may be able to do something for him.

The young man's rage had exhausted itself and he cried to the prince: "My heart tells me that you are my father, and I pray you, by the memory of my mother, to give me a hearing."

But the prince only shook his head—"How the poor fellow raves," he said, then, leaning upon the false prince's arm, he began to descend the hill. They then mounted beautifully caparisoned

horses and rode at the head of the company across the plains.

The unfortunate prince had his hands firmly bound and was placed upon a camel whilst a guard rode on either side of him to watch his every movement.

The aged prince was named Saaud, and he was Sultan of the Wechabites.

For a long time he had been childless and then one son had been born to him. But the astrologers whom he had consulted as to the boy's future told him that until he had passed the age of twenty-two he would be in constant danger of being supplanted by an enemy, and therefore he had entrusted the care of his child to his old and valued friend Elfi Bey, and had passed two-and-twenty anxious years awaiting his son's coming.

The Sultan told his supposed son this story and added how pleased and more than contented he was with his appearance and bearing.

On reaching the Sultan's own country they were greeted with shouts of joy by the whole populace, for the news of the prince's coming had spread like wildfire through all the villages and towns. Arches of flowers and greenery spanned the roads, and tapestries of gorgeous colours decked the houses, and all the people shouted praise to the Prophet for sending them such a handsome prince. No wonder the tailor's heart swelled with pride and joy, whilst Prince Omar felt more unhappy than ever at his sad state. The air resounded with cries of "Omar," but he who had the right to the name rode

unnoticed through the throng, except when now and then some one asked who it was that was bound and guarded so securely. Then the answers his guards made caused his heart to sink: "He is but a mad tailor," they said.

The procession at length reached the Sultan's capital, where everything had been prepared for their reception with even greater splendour than in the other towns. The Sultana, an elderly and dignified lady, awaited them with her entire court in the most magnificent room in the palace. The floor of the apartment was covered with an enormous carpet and the walls were hung with pale blue cloth, draped with golden cords and tassels which hung from silver hooks.

As it was already dark when the procession reached the palace, the room was lighted with innumerable many-coloured lamps, the light from which turned night into day. Beneath the brightest light the Sultana sat upon her throne, which was raised upon four steps and was of pure gold set with amethysts. The four most distinguished emirs held a canopy of red silk over her head, and the Sheik of Medina fanned her with a fan of peacock's feathers.

Thus the Sultana awaited the coming of the son she had not seen since his birth, although in her dreams he had been frequently present with her, so that she felt certain she would know him again in the midst of thousands.

Presently the noise of the approaching procession was heard, and before long the curtains were drawn

aside and the Sultan approached his wife, leading his supposed son by the hand.

"Here I bring you the son you have yearned for so long," he cried. But the Sultana would not allow him to proceed—"That is not my son," said she. "Those are not the features the Prophet allowed me to gaze on in my dreams."

Just as the Sultan was about to reprove her for her superstition, the door burst open and in dashed the rightful prince, who had managed to escape from his guards. Breathlessly he flung himself before the throne and cried: "Slay me here if you will, O cruel father, for this shame will I bear no longer."

All present were astounded at his words, and the guards would once more have seized the unfortunate prince, but the Sultana stepped forward and, gazing at him earnestly, cried: "Stay, this is my rightful son, this is he whom my eyes have never rested on since his birth, but whom my heart recognises nevertheless."

The guards drew back involuntarily; but the Sultan cried to them in wrath to seize the madman. "It is for me to decide," he said angrily. "Of what worth are the dreams of a woman beside the real token which this, my son, brought me from my friend Elfi Bey. He who brought the dagger is the rightful heir."

"It was stolen," cried Omar furiously. "He betrayed my confidence with treachery and stole the dagger."

But the Sultan would not listen to his son,

for he was very obstinate when once he had formed an opinion, and he ordered Omar to be taken away by force, and he went to his own room violently enraged with the Sultana, with whom he had lived in peace and happiness for the last five-and-twenty years. Of course Labakan accompanied him; but the Sultana remained behind in great grief, for she was absolutely certain that an impostor had gained the affection of the Sultan and ousted their own son.

When her grief had somewhat subsided she set herself to think of means wherewith she could convince her husband of his error. This was a difficult task, for the dagger had been the token decided upon as a means of recognition, and moreover Omar had related so much of his early life to Labakan that the tailor was able to play his part without betraying himself.

She called to her presence the men who had been with the Sultan at the Pillar of El-Serujah, in order to question them narrowly as to what had taken place there, and then she took counsel with her most confidential slaves.

Many suggestions were offered, but at length an old Circassian woman asked: "Did not the bearer of the dagger say that he whom you regard as your son was in reality Labakan, a tailor's apprentice?"

"Yes, that is so," replied the Sultana, "but I do not see what that has to do with the case."

"May it not be that he gave his own name and trade to your son?" said the slave. "If this is so, then I know of a plan by which we can

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detect the impostor, and which I will tell you of in secret."

The slave whispered her plan in the Sultana's ear, and the mistress approved so well of it that she prepared herself at once to go into the Sultan's presence.

The Sultana was a wise woman, well knowing the Sultan's weak points and how to take advantage of them, and so she pretended to yield her opinion and to be willing to accept the false son, merely making one condition. The Sultan, who regretted the anger he had shown towards his wife, readily agreed to let her make her own condition.

"Well," said she, "we will set the two claimants a task. Anyone can manage a horse or throw a spear; but I have hit upon something more difficult. We will see which of them shall make the best caftan and a pair of trousers."

The Sultan laughed good-naturedly: "And so my son is to compete with your crazy tailor," he said. "Well, be it as you will, but if the tailor makes ever so fine a caftan I will not own him as a son."

The Sultan went to his son and begged him to gratify the whim of his mother who wished for a caftan made by the hands of her son. Labakan laughed for joy. If it only depended on that, he thought, then the Sultana would very speedily be well pleased with him.

Two rooms had been prepared, one for the prince, the other for the tailor, and there they were

to give proof of their skill, and each was given a piece of silk, scissors, needles and thread. The Sultan was very curious as to what sort of a thing his son's caftan would look like.

The Sultana felt nervous and her heart beat anxiously lest her plan should prove a failure.

The slave whispered her plan in the Sultana's ear (P. 100.)

Two days were allowed the young men in which to complete their task, and on the third day the Sultan sent for his wife and as soon as she had joined him he ordered the two young men to be brought in and to bring their caftans with them.

Labakan strode triumphantly into the apartment and spread out his garment proudly before the eyes of the astonished Sultan. "See, father," said he, "see, most honoured mother, is this not a masterpiece? I would lay a wager that even the court tailor himself could not make a better one."

The Sultana smiled and turned to Omar: "And what have you accomplished, my son?" said she.

For reply Omar flung the roll of silk and scissors upon the floor. "I was taught to manage

a horse, to handle a sword, and to hurl a lance," said he, "but the art of needlework is unknown to me, neither is it a fitting art for the adopted son of Elfi Bey, the ruler of Cairo."

"O thou true son of thy father," cried the Sultana, "oh! that I might embrace thee and claim thee for my son. Pardon me, my lord and master," she said, turning to the Sultan, "that I have tricked you in this way, in order to prove to you which is the prince and which the tailor. Certainly the caftan your son has made is a magnificent one, but I should like to ask him who taught him his trade?"

The Sultan bit his lip and glanced suspiciously first at his wife and then at Labakan, who had turned crimson with embarrassment and vexation at having betrayed himself.

"This test is not sufficient," the Sultan decreed, "but Allah be praised, I know of a way out of the difficulty."

He ordered his swiftest horse to be saddled, mounted in haste, and rode off towards a wood, which was not far from the city. In the midst of this wood dwelt a fairy named Adolzaide, who was said to have befriended previous Sultans of that country and given them good advice when they were in any difficulty, and so the Sultan turned to her in his present trouble.

He reached the spot where she was supposed to dwell, and having dismounted and tethered his horse to a tree, he cried out in a loud voice: "Adolzaide, if it be true that you have befriended

my fathers in former times, help me now in my dire need, I pray you."

Scarcely had he spoken these words when the trunk of a cedar tree parted and a veiled woman, clad in long white garments, appeared.

"I know your errand, Sultan Saaud," she said, "and I am ready to help you, because your desire is an honourable and just one. Take these two caskets, show them to the two youths who claim to be your son, and let them choose which casket they will have. The true Omar will not fail to choose rightly, and you will then be no longer in doubt as to which is your heir."

The veiled woman then handed him two caskets of ivory, richly ornamented with gold and pearls. Upon the lids of the caskets, which the Sultan was unable to raise, were inscriptions in glittering diamonds; one was "Honour and Glory" and the other "Happiness and Riches." The Sultan racked his brains to try and discover how the caskets could possibly help him to discover his real son. He tried again and again to open the lids, but in vain.

As soon as the Sultan reached his palace he sent for the Sultana and told her the result of his visit to the fairy, and her heart leapt with joy, for she was certain that now the truth would be arrived at.

A table was placed before the Sultan's throne and upon it the Sultan himself placed the two caskets, then he seated himself upon his throne and made a sign to one of his slaves to open the

doors of the apartment. A brilliant train of pashas and emirs streamed in, for they had been ordered to be in attendance when this further trial was made. They seated themselves upon the cushions ranged along the walls, and then the Sultan ordered Labakan to be summoned.

Proudly he stepped into the room and, bowing before the throne, asked: "What does my lord and father command?"

"My son," replied the Sultan, "as some doubt has been cast upon your claim to bear the name you call yourself, this test will decide the truth. Here are two caskets; choose one, I doubt not you will choose rightly."

Labakan approached the caskets and read the inscriptions; he pondered awhile and then said— "Honoured father! what can be greater than the happiness of being your son, and what more noble than the riches of your favour? I choose the casket with the inscriptions 'Happiness and Riches.'"

"Later on we will see if you have chosen rightly," said the Sultan, and then he signed to his slaves to bring Omar in.

His downcast looks and dejected mien roused the pity of all who beheld him. He threw himself down before the throne and enquired what the will of the Sultan might be.

He was told he had to choose one of the caskets upon the table. He read the inscriptions carefully and then said: "The last few day have taught me how uncertain happiness is and how fleeting are riches; but

THE STORY OF
THE FALSE PRINCE

CHOOSING THE
CASKETS
(p. 104)

they have also taught me that honour dwells for ever in the brave man's heart, and the glory of a good name is better than riches—therefore I choose 'Honour and Glory.'"

Before the Sultan allowed either of the young men to open their caskets he sent for a ewer of water from the holy stream in Mecca, and, having washed his hands, he turned his face towards the East and prayed to the Prophet that he would allow this test to decide beyond all doubt the identity of the rightful prince. Then he arose and bade the young men open their caskets, but although before it had been found impossible to raise the lids they now flew open of their own accord.

Inside Omar's casket, upon a tiny velvet cushion, lay a little golden crown and sceptre, but within Labakan's lay a needle and thread.

The Sultan commanded them to bring the caskets to him. He took the little crown from its velvet bed and immediately it began to increase in size until it was large enough to set upon his son's head, which the Sultan did, bidding Omar sit down at his right hand.

Then turning to Labakan, he said: "There is an old proverb, 'The shoemaker must stick to his last,' and it seems that you must stick to your needle. Had it not been that someone, to whom I can deny nothing, has pleaded for you, it would have gone hardly with you, but as it is I will spare your wretched life, but I warn you to hasten to leave my country."

Ashamed and repentant, Labakan cast himself at the feet of the prince.

"Can you ever forgive me my treachery?" he cried, with tears in his eyes.

"'Faithful to a friend, generous to an enemy,' is the motto of our race," answered the prince—"therefore I bid thee 'go in peace.'"

"You are indeed my son," cried the aged Sultan, embracing him, and all the pashas and emirs rose and shouted: "Hail to the king's son, hail to our noble prince."

During the noise occasioned by these general rejoicings, Labakan, his casket beneath his arm, slipped unperceived from the room.

He hurried down to the stable, bridled his horse Murva, and rode out of the gateway in the direction of Alexandria.

His life as prince appeared to him now like a brief but splendid dream, only the beautiful casket set with pearls and diamonds remained to remind him that he had not dreamt it all.

When at length he reached Alexandria, he rode to the shop of his former master, dismounted, fastened his horse to the door-post and went in.

His master, who did not recognise him at first, bowed and asked what he might require, but when he looked at the supposed customer more closely he saw who he was and, calling his apprentices and pupils to come to his assistance, they call set upon Labakan and beat him soundly with whatever they happened to have in their hands, flat irons, measures, shears, and so

on, until at last the poor fellow fell at their feet as limp as a heap of old clothes.

As he lay there his master gave him a sound rating for having stolen the caftan; in vain Labakan assured him he was there to restore it, no one would believe him, and some of the apprentices picked him up and threw him out of the door. He managed to get upon Murva's back and rode away to a little inn, where he was glad to lay his weary head upon a pillow, whilst he mused upon the uncertainty of happiness and the vanity of earthly riches, and before he fell asleep he had determined to renounce his dreams of grandeur and set to work to earn his living as an honest fellow.

The next day, being still of the same mind, he sold his casket to a dealer in precious stones, bought himself a house and set up a workshop. He hung out a sign with "Labakan, Tailor," painted upon it, and then began to await his customers.

As his clothing had been most grievously torn by the rough handling he had received from his master and former companions, he took the needle and thread he had found in the casket and began to repair his clothing. He was called away and on his return, as he was about to continue his work what was his surprise to find his needle sewing busily away without any hand to guide it and making the finest and neatest stitches, quite surpassing the best work Labakan had ever done.

Truly, even the smallest of fairy gifts is bound to prove useful and valuable. Not the least value

of this gift was the fact that the thread in the needle was never used up, but sewed on and on, no matter how much the needle sewed.

It was no wonder Labakan soon became famous as a tailor. Orders flocked in from far and near, and all he had to do was to start the needle sewing, and it went straight on by itself until the garment was finished.

Master Labakan worked so much better and cheaper than any other tailor in Alexandria that everybody wished to have their clothes made by him; only one thing puzzled them, he employed no assistants and he always worked with his door shut.

So after all the motto on his casket came true, for happiness and riches came to him, though in a different guise to what he had expected them. From time to time he heard news of Prince Omar. It was said that he was the bravest of the brave, the pride and glory of his people, and the terror of his enemies. At such times as he heard of him Labakan would say to himself: "I am better off as a tailor, for to win honour and glory one must risk one's life."

And so he lived happy and contented all the days of his life, and as for the magic needle, for all I know to the contrary, it may be sewing busily away to this very day.

THE DWARF LONG-NOSE

Jacob

MANY years ago, in a certain city in Germany, there lived an honest cobbler and his wife. The good man sat all day and mended boots and shoes; he made new ones too, if he could get a customer to trust him with the job, but then he had first to buy the leather, for he was too poor to keep a stock in hand. His wife sold fruit and vegetables, which she grew in a little plot of ground outside the city gates. She had many customers, for she was clean and tidy, and had a knack of setting out her wares to be best advantage.

The cobbler and his wife had a beautiful little boy, named Jacob. Although he was but eight years of age he was tall and well

grown, and so he sat by his mother's side in the market-place, and acted as errand boy to the housewives and cooks who made large purchases from his mother, carrying the fruit and vegetables home for them. Very often he came back with a piece of money in his pocket, or at least with a cake, or some sweetmeats, for he was so pretty and obliging that people liked to see him in their homes.

One morning the cobbler's wife was sitting in her accustomed place in the market. She had a supply of cabbages and other vegetables, fresh herbs and seeds, and a smaller basket of early pears and apricots.

Little Jacob sat beside her and called out in his shrill little voice: "Come buy, come buy, fine cabbages, fresh herbs, early pears, fine ripe apples and apricots. Come buy, buy, buy, my mother's goods are cheap to-day."

An old woman came slowly across the market-place. She was dressed in rags and tatters and had a little, pointed face, all wrinkled and furrowed with age, red-rimmed eyes, and a sharp hooked nose that nearly met the pointed chin. She helped herself along with a stick, and it is difficult to say how she moved, for she stumbled and limped and rolled along almost as though her legs were broken-down wheels which would soon give way.

The cobbler's wife stared hard at her, for although she had been sitting in the market-place every day for the last sixteen years she had never noticed the queer old creature before. But she shud-

THE DWARF
LONG-NOSE.

"An old woman came slowly across the market-place."

dered involuntarily when the old woman hobbled towards her and stood still before the baskets.

"Are you Hannah, the vegetable dealer?" she said in a cracked unpleasant voice, her head shaking as though with palsy.

"Yes, that is my name," replied the cobbler's wife, "is there anything I can serve you with?"

"I must see, I must see," she replied. "Let me look at your herbs and see if you have anything I require."

She plunged her brown skinny fingers into the basket of herbs which had been so neatly set out, and, grasping handful after handful, put them to her long hooked nose and smelt them.

The cobbler's wife was much put out to see her rare herbs handled in this way, but she did not like to say anything, for it was the customer's right to examine the goods, and besides she was half afraid of the old woman.

When the whole of the basket of herbs had been handled and turned over the old woman muttered— "Rubbish, rubbish, the whole lot of it. Fifty years ago I could have bought what I wanted; this is good for nothing."

These words angered little Jacob. "You are a rude old woman," he said angrily; "first you take up our beautiful fresh herbs in your nasty brown fingers and crush them, then you put them to your long, hooked nose, so that nobody else who had seen you, would want to buy them, and then you miscall our wares, as bad stuff and rubbish,

when even the Duke's cook does not disdain to buy from us."

The old woman looked fixedly at the spirited lad and laughed in a repulsive manner. Then said she, in a hoarse croaking voice, "Ah, my little man, do you like my nose, my nice long nose? Then you shall have a nice long nose too, one that shall reach from the middle of your face right down below your chin." As she talked she shuffled along to the other basket in which the cabbages were placed. She took the finest creamy crisp heads and crushed them in her hands until they creaked and cracked, then threw them back into the basket anyhow. "Bad goods, bad cabbages," she said.

"Don't shake your head to and fro like that," cried the little boy, beginning to feel frightened. "Your neck is as thin as a cabbage stalk and looks as though it might snap in two, and if your head rolled off into our cabbage basket, who would buy from us then?"

"So you don't like thin necks, eh?" muttered the old woman. "Very well, then, you shall have none at all. Your head shall stick close down to your shoulders so that there will be no danger of its falling off your little body."

"Come, come, don't talk such rubbish to the child," said the cobbler's wife, vexed at length, "if you wish to buy anything make your choice for you are frightening other customers away."

"Very well," answered the old woman grimly, "I will buy these six cabbages. But you must let

your little son carry them home for me, for I have to support myself on my stick and can carry nothing myself. I will reward him for his trouble."

The little boy did not want to go and began to cry, for he was afraid of the ugly old woman, but his mother bade him go quite sternly, she would have been ashamed to let the weakly old creature carry such a heavy burden, so he put the cabbages in a cloth and followed the old woman from the market-place.

She walked so slowly that it was about three-quarters of an hour before they reached her home, which was in a very out-of-the-way part of the town, and which was a miserable-looking little house.

The old woman drew a rusty key from her pocket and slipped it into the keyhole, and the door sprang open.

But what was little Jacob's astonishment on entering the house to find it most beautiful. The walls and ceiling were of marble, the furniture of ebony, inlaid with gold and polished jewels, and the floor was of glass and so slippery that the little boy fell down several times.

The old woman drew a little silver whistle from her pocket and blew it so shrilly that the tones resounded all through the house.

A number of guinea-pigs at once came hurrying down the stairs, and Jacob was astounded to see that they were walking erect on their hind legs and had their feet thrust into nut-shells in-

stead of shoes. They wore men's clothing and had hats on their heads made in the newest fashion.

"Where have you put my slippers, you ragamuffins?" asked the old woman, striking them with her staff, so that they began to whine and jump about. "How much longer do you expect to keep me standing here?"

The guinea-pigs bounded up the stairs and soon returned with a pair of cocoa-nut shells, lined and bound with leather. These they put on the old woman's feet and at once she ceased to hobble and limp, flung away her staff, and began to glide about over the slippery floor with the greatest rapidity, dragging Jacob after her.

She came at length to a room bearing some resemblance to a kitchen, though the tables were of mahogany, and the couches and chairs covered with exquisite tapestries. "Sit down," said the old woman in friendly tones, pushing him as she spoke into a corner of a sofa and then rolling a table in front of him, so that he could not get out again.

"You must be tired, walking so far, and carrying such a heavy burden," she said, "now I am going to reward you for your trouble and make you some soup such as you have never tasted before, and will remember all your life long." She again blew her whistle and again a number of guinea-pigs appeared, dressed in human attire. They wore cook's aprons, and had cooking spoons and carving knives stuck in their waistbands. After them

came a crowd of squirrels, clad in wide Turkish trousers, with little green velvet caps on their heads. They appeared to be the kitchen servants, for they at once began to clamber up and down the walls and brought pots and pans, eggs and butter, herbs and flour, and carried them to the fireplace, where the old woman seemed to be very busy with her cookery.

The fire burned merrily and the contents of the pans began to steam and hiss and send forth a very pleasant smell.

At length the soup was cooked and the old woman poured some into a silver dish and set it before little Jacob.

"Eat, my little man," said she, "and you will have all that you have coveted in me. You shall become a clever cook too, but you shall never, never find the herb that was missing in your mother's basket."

The boy did not understand what she was talking about; but he went on eating his soup, which was delicious. His mother often cooked tasty dishes for him, but never anything like this. An odour of fine herbs and vegetables arose from it, it was both sour and sweet and very strong. As he finished the last of it the guinea-pigs set light to some incense, which rose in a blue cloud and was wafted through the room. Thicker and thicker the incense rose and the little boy began to feel stupefied.

He tried to rise, telling himself that he must hasten back to his mother, but he only fell back

again, and at length, quite overcome, he fell fast asleep on the old woman's sofa.

Then he began to dream, such strange dreams! It seemed to him as though the old woman took off all his clothes and dressed him up in a squirrel's skin and he was at once able to jump about like the other squirrels in the house and began to take his place with them and the guinea-pigs, and that, like they, he too became one of the old woman's servants.

At first he was the shoe-black and it was his duty to polish the cocoa-nut shells the old woman wore instead of shoes. He had learnt to polish shoes in his own home, and as his father was a cobbler he had been particularly well taught, so that he was clever at his work. A year seemed to pass and then he dreamt that he was given more important duties. He and some other squirrels were set to work to catch the sunbeam dust and sift it through fine sieves. This dust was used instead of flour to make the bread the old woman ate, for she had no teeth, and sunbeam dust makes the very softest and finest of bread. Another dream year passed and then he was promoted to be one of the water-carriers. You must not imagine the old woman kept a water-cistern or a water-butt handy. Oh! dear no! Jacob and the squirrels had to draw the dew from the roses into hazel-nut shells; this was the old woman's drinking water, and as she was always thirsty it was hard work to keep her supplied with it. At the end of another year he was appointed to do the indoor

work. His particular duty was to keep the glass floor in order. He had to sweep it over and then wrap soft polishing cloths round his feet and slide up and down the room until the glass shone brilliantly.

At the end of the year he was promoted to the kitchen; this was a place of honour, only to be reached after long training. He began at the beginning as a scullion and advanced rapidly until he was head cook. Sometimes he could not but wonder at his own skill, for he could cook the most difficult dishes and could make no less than two hundred different kinds of pastries. Then he was a first-rate hand at soups, and could make every kind that had ever been heard of, and knew the use of every kind of vegetable that grew.

Jacob had to draw the dew from the roses
(P. 118.)

Several years had now passed away in the

service of the old woman and one day she put on her cocoa-nut shoes, took her staff and basket in her hand, and prepared to go out. Before leaving she told Jacob to cook a chicken for her dinner on her return and be sure to stuff it well with seasoning.

When he had prepared the chicken, he went to the room where the herbs were kept to collect some to stuff it with, and to his surprise saw a little cupboard that he had not noticed before. The door was ajar and he peeped curiously in and saw a number of little baskets from which issued a strong and pleasant odour. He opened one of them and saw that it contained a very curious-looking plant. The leaves and stalks were of a bluish-green colour and it bore a flower of a deep red hue, flecked with yellow. He looked closely at the flower, then smelt it and noticed it had the same scent as the soup which the old woman had once cooked for him. It was a very strong scent, so strong indeed that it made him sneeze, and he went on sneezing again and again until at length—he awoke.

He lay on the old woman's sofa and looked around him in surprise. "How real dreams do seem sometimes," he said to himself. "I could have been certain that I was a squirrel just now, and had guinea-pigs and squirrels for my companions, also that I had learnt to be a first-rate cook. How Mother will laugh when I tell her all about it, but she will scold me, too, for having fallen asleep in a stranger's house instead of helping her in the market-place."

He jumped up in a hurry, but his limbs were stiff from sleeping so long, especially his neck: he could not turn it about very easily, and he seemed so sleepy still that he kept striking his nose against the walls and cupboards.

As he stood upon the threshold the guinea-pigs and squirrels came whimpering round him as though they would like to go with him and he begged them to come, for they were dear little creatures, but they went clattering back in their nut-shell shoes and he could hear them squeaking away in the house.

The old woman had brought him a long distance from the market-place, and he had some difficulty in finding his way back through the narrow lanes, especially as there seemed to be a great crowd of people. Somewhere near he thought there must be a dwarf to be seen, for the people were pushing and craning their necks and calling out to one another, "Just look, what a hideous dwarf! Where can he come from? What a long nose he has, and how his head is sunk between his high shoulders; he has no neck at all, and see what great brown hands he has."

Jacob would have liked to have seen the dwarf himself, for he always liked to see anything extraordinary, but he could not wait, because he knew he ought to hurry back to his mother.

He felt frightened and nervous when at length he reached the market-place, for his mother looked so altered. He felt sure he could not have slept very long, for she had still a quantity of fruit and

vegetables unsold, but she sat with her head leaning on her hand, never calling out to the passers-by to buy her wares. She was paler too, and looked very sad.

He hesitated as to what he should do, but at length he took heart and crept up behind her and, laying his hand caressingly upon her arm, said: "Mother dear, what ails you? Are you angry with me?"

She turned to look at him, but started back with a cry of horror. "What do you want with me, you hideous dwarf," she cried. "Such jokes are out of place."

"But, Mother," said Jacob in alarm, "you cannot be well. Why do you drive your son away?"

"Have I not told you to go away," said Hannah angrily, "you will get nothing from me by such jokes, you ugly creature."

"She must be out of her mind," said the little one, "however shall I get her back home? Mother dear, look well at me, I am your own little son Jacob."

"Now you have gone too far with your impertinence," cried the woman. "Not content, you hideous dwarf, with standing there and frightening my customers away, you must needs make game of my grief and sorrow. Neighbours, listen to this fellow, who dares to say he is my son Jacob."

Her neighbours all came crowding round her and began to abuse poor Jacob in no measured terms, telling him it was cruel to joke with a

"Good gracious me, what is that?"
(P. 124.)

poor bereaved mother who had had her lovely boy stolen away seven long years ago, and they threatened to tear him limb from limb if he did not go away at once.

Poor Jacob knew not what to make of it all. He had gone that morning with his mother to

the market-place, or so he believed, had helped her set out her wares of fruit and vegetables, had carried home the old woman's cabbages, taken a little soup and fallen asleep for a short time, and yet his mother and the neighbours declared he had been absent seven years.

And they called him a horrible dwarf! What could have taken place? When he saw that his mother would have nothing to do with him the tears came into his eyes, and he turned sadly away and went up the street towards the little shop where his father sat and mended shoes during the day-time.

"I will see if he will recognise me," he said to himself. "I will just stand in the doorway and speak to him."

When he reached the cobbler's shop he stood in the doorway and looked in. The old man was so busy that he did not notice him at first, but presently, on looking up, he dropped the shoe he was mending and cried out: "Good gracious me, what is that?"

"Good evening, master," said the little man, as he entered the shop, "how is trade just now?"

"Bad, very bad, little gentleman," said the cobbler. "I cannot work as well as I did, I am getting old and I have no one to help me, for I cannot afford an assistant."

Jacob was astounded that his father should not have recognised him either, so he answered: "Have you no son whom you could train to help you?"

"I had one, Jacob by name; he should be a tall, well-grown youth by now, who would have been able to be my right hand, for even as a little fellow he was handy and clever at my trade. He was so handsome too, and had such pleasant manners, that he would no doubt have brought me more customers; very likely by this time I might have given up cobbling shoes and have made new ones instead. But alas! such is life!"

"Where is your son then?" enquired Jacob with trembling voice.

"No one can tell," replied the old man, "for seven years ago he was stolen from us."

"Seven years ago," cried Jacob in horrorstricken tones.

"Yes, little gentleman, seven long years ago. I remember it as though it were yesterday. My wife came home from the market weeping and wringing her hands, the child had been absent all day, and though she had searched for him everywhere she had not been able to find him. I had warned her many a time to keep a careful eye upon our pretty boy, telling her there were bad folks in the town who might steal him for the sake of his good looks. But she was proud of him, and often, when the gentry bought fruit and vegetables of her, she sent him to carry home their purchases.

"But one day an ugly old woman came into the market and began to bargain with her. In the end she bought more than she could carry, and my wife, being a kind-hearted woman, let her

take the boy with her, and—from that hour to this he has never been seen again."

"And that was seven years ago?" asked Jacob.

"Seven years, alas! We sought him high and low, and our neighbours, who had all known and loved the dear little fellow, helped in the search; but without avail. Neither could we hear any news of the old woman who had taken him away. No one seemed to know anything about her except one old woman who was over ninety years of age, and she said she must be the wicked Fairy Herbina, who visited the town once every fifty years to buy things she required.

Thus spoke Jacob's father, as he hammered away at his shoe and drew the thread backwards and forwards busily, and the poor little fellow began to understand at last what had happened to him. It had been no dream, but, transformed into a squirrel, he had really served the wicked fairy for seven years. His heart was well-nigh ready to burst with rage and grief. Seven years of his youth had been stolen from him and what had he received in return? He had learnt to polish cocoa-nut shoes and glass floors. Also he had learnt all the secrets of the art of cookery from the old woman's guinea-pigs! He stood so long considering what had been said, that his father asked him at length: "Can I do anything for you, sir? Do you require a pair of shoes, or," he added with a smile, "perhaps a covering for your nose would be useful to you."

"What is the matter with my nose?" asked Jacob, "why should I require a covering for it?"

"Well," replied the cobbler, "everyone to his taste. But I must say if I had a nose like yours I would make a case for it of bright red leather. See, I have just such a piece by me. A good stout cover for your nose would be most useful, for I am quite sure you must be constantly knocking it against everything that comes in your way."

The little fellow's heart sank with fear. He felt his nose and found it was very thick and quite two spans in length. And so the old woman had altered his appearance too! That was why his mother had not known him and why everyone called him "an ugly dwarf."

"Master," he said to his father, "have you a mirror you could lend me?"

"Young sir," said the father earnestly, "your figure is hardly such as to give you cause for conceit, and you have no reason to look into a glass constantly. Break yourself of the habit, in your case it is a foolish one."

"Believe me it is not out of conceit that I wish to see myself," said Jacob, "and I do beseech you to lend me a glass for a moment."

"I do not possess such a thing," said the cobbler. "My wife had one somewhere, but I do not know where she has hidden it. If you really do wish to see yourself, you had best go across the road and ask Urban, the barber, to let you take a look in his. He has one about twice the size of your head, so go and admire yourself by all means."

With these words his father took him by the shoulders and pushed him gently from the shop, locked the door upon him and went on with his work.

Jacob, who had known the barber well in days gone by, crossed the road and entered his shop.

"Good-morning, Urban," he said, "I have come to ask a favour of you. Will you be so good as to allow me a glance into your looking-glass?"

"With pleasure, there it stands," he said laughing heartily, and the customer who was being shaved laughed also. "You are a handsome little fellow," the barber went on, "tall and slim, a neck like a swan, hands as dainty as a queen's, and as pretty a little nose as one could see anywhere. It is no wonder that you are conceited, and wish to take a glance at yourself. Well, you are welcome to the use of my mirrors, for it shall never be said of me that I was so jealous of your good looks I would not lend you my mirror to admire them in." Shrieks of laughter greeted the barber's words, but poor little Jacob, who had seen himself reflected in the mirror, could not keep the tears from his eyes. "No wonder you did not recognise your son, Mother dear," he said to himself, "in the happy days when you were wont to parade him proudly before the neighbours' eyes, he bore little resemblance to the thing he has now become."

Poor fellow, his eyes were small and set like a pig's, his nose was enormous und reached beyond his chin, his neck had disappeared altogether, and his head had sunk down between his shoulders, so that it

was painful to attempt to move it either to the right or left. He was no taller than he had been seven years before, but his back and his chest were bowed out in such a manner that they resembled a well-filled sack supported upon two weak little legs. His arms, however, had grown so long that they hung down almost to his feet, and his coarse brown hands were the size of those of a full-grown man, with ugly spider-like fingers. The handsome, lively little Jacob had been changed into an ugly and repulsive-looking dwarf.

Jacob, who had seen himself reflected in the mirror, could not keep the tears from his eyes. (P. 128.)

He thought once more of the morning on which the old witch had fingered his mother's goods and when he had twitted her with her large nose and ugly hands. Everything he had found fault with in her she had given him now, with the exception of the thin neck, for he had no neck at all.

"Surely you have admired yourself sufficiently," said the barber laughingly. "Never in my dreams have I seen such a comical fellow as you, and I have a proposal to make to you. It is true I have a great many customers, but not quite so many as I had at

one time, for my rival, Barber Lather, has come across a giant and has engaged him to stand at his door and invite the people to enter. Now a giant is no very great wonder, but you are, my little man. Enter into my service, and I will give you board and lodging and clothing free, and all you will have to do is to stand at my door and ask folks to come in and be shaved, and hand the towels, soap and so on to the customers. I shall get more customers and you may be sure you will receive a good many coins for yourself."

The little fellow was inwardly very much hurt that he should have been invited to act as a barber's decoy; but he answered quite politely that he did not wish for such employment and walked out of the shop.

His one consolation was that, however much the old witch had altered his body, she had had no control over his spirit. He felt that his mind had become enlarged and improved, and he knew himself to be wiser and more intelligent than he had been seven years previously. He wasted no time in bewailing the loss of his good looks, but what did grieve him was the thought that he had been driven like a dog from his father's door, and therefore he determined to make one more effort to convince his mother of his identity.

He returned to the market-place and begged her to listen quietly to him. He reminded her of the day on which the old woman had taken him away and recalled to her many incidents of his childhood. Then he told her how, transformed into a squirrel, he had served the wicked fairy for seven years, and how

his present hideous features had been given him because he had found fault with the old woman's features.

The cobbler's wife knew not what to believe. Every detail he had told her of his childhood was correct, and yet she could not believe it possible that he could have been changed into a squirrel, besides which she did not believe in fairies, good or evil. When she looked at the ugly little dwarf she found it impossible to accept him as her son. She thought the best thing that could be done was to talk the matter over with her husband, and so she collected her baskets and she and Jacob went back to the cobbler's shop.

"See here," she said, "this fellow declares he is our lost Jacob. He has described to me exactly how he was stolen away seven years ago and how he has been bewitched by a bad fairy."

"Indeed," cried the cobbler angrily, "he has told you exactly what I told him an hour ago, and has tried to take you in with his story. Bewitched was he, well, I will disenchant this litte son of mine."

So saying, the cobbler took a bundle of leather strappings and, seizing poor Jacob, whipped him unmercifully, until the poor fellow, screaming with pain, managed to make his escape.

It is strange how little sympathy is ever shown to an unfortunate being who happens to have anything ridiculous about his appearance. This was the reason that poor Jacob was obliged to pass all that day and night without tasting food and that he had no better couch than the cold steps of a church.

But, notwithstanding, he slept until the morning sun rose and wakened him, and then he set himself earnestly to consider how he was to earn a livelihood for himself, seeing that this father and mother had cast him off.

He was too proud to serve as a barber's sign-post, or to exhibit himself in a show for money. But, remembering how excellently he had learnt to cook when he was in his squirrel form, he thought it possible that he might make use of his art now; at any rate he determined to try. He remembered to have heard that the Duke who owned that country was said to be very fond of good living, and so, as soon as the day was sufficiently advanced, he made his way to the palace.

The cobbler whipped him unmercifully (P. 131.)

The porter at the great gateway laughed at him in scorn when he said he wished to see the chief cook, but on his persisting he led him across the courtyard; all the servants who were about the place stared at him, and then followed in his train, laughing and jeering at him.

They made such an uproar that the steward came out to see what all the noise was about. He carried a whip in his hand and with it he laid about him right

and left. "You hounds," said he, "how dare you disturb your master's slumbers? Don't you know that he is not awake yet?"

"But, sir," cried the servants, "look what brings us here. Is that not excuse enough? Look at the queer little dwarf we are bringing you?"

As the steward saw poor Jacob he had hard work to keep from laughing, too, but as he considered it would be beneath his dignity to join in the mirth with the other servants he managed to restrain himself, and driving them off with his whip, led Jacob into his own apartments and asked him what he wanted. Jacob begged to be conducted to the head cook, but the steward could scarcely believe him.

"Surely, my little man, it is to me you wish to apply for a situation. Do you not wish to become the Duke's jester?"

"No, sir," replied the dwarf. "I am a first-rate cook and understand how to prepare all sorts of delicacies. I thought the head cook might be willing to make use of my art."

"Every man to his own liking, little man; but it seems to me you are rather a foolish fellow. As the Duke's jester you would have had no work to do, fine clothes to wear, and plenty of good food to eat and drink. Still, we will see what we can do for you, though I doubt if your cookery is sufficiently good to suit the Duke's table, and you are too good to be made a mere scullion of."

The steward then led him to the head cook, to whom Jacob hastened to offer his services.

The head cook took a good look at him and burst out laughing. "You a cook indeed!" he said scornfully. "Why, you could not reach the top of the stove to stir a pan. Someone has been making game of you in sending you here."

But Jacob was not to be put off in this way. "Of what account are a few eggs, syrup and wine, flour and spices in a house like this?" he said; "order me to make any tasty dish you can think of and allow me to have the ingredients I require and you shall soon judge whether or no I am a good cook."

"Well, so be it," said the head cook, and, taking the steward's arm, he led the way to the kitchen. "Just for the joke of the thing we will let the little man do as he wishes."

The kitchen was a magnificent place. Fires burned in twenty huge stoves, a stream of clear water, which served also for a fish-pond, flowed through the apartment, the cupboards which contained the stores mostly in use were of marble and costly wood, and there were ten large pantries containing every kind of delicious foods from both Eastern and Western countries.

Numbers of servants were running to and fro, carrying kettles and pans and spoons and ladles. As the head cook entered they all stood still and there was not a sound to be heard but the crackling of the fires and the rippling of the stream. "What has the Duke ordered for his breakfast to-day?" the great man asked of one of the inferior cooks.

"My lord has been pleased to order Danish soup and red Hamburg patties," replied the man.

"Very well," said the head cook, turning to Jacob, "you hear what his Highness has ordered. Will you undertake to prepare such difficult dishes? As to the Hamburg patties, you will never be able to make them, for the recipe is a secret."

"There is nothing easier," replied the dwarf, for as a squirrel cook he had often been called upon to prepare these dishes. "For the soup I shall require herbs, spices, wild boar's head, certain roots, vegetables, and eggs, and for the patties (here he lowered his voice so that only the steward and the head cook could hear him) I require four kinds of meat, ginger, and a sprig of a herb that is known by the name of 'trencher-man's mint.'"

The dwarf prepared the food.
(P. 136.)

"By my honour as a cook, you must have learnt your trade from a magician," said the head cook. "You have hit upon the right ingredients, and the mint is an addition I never thought of, but which will certainly add to the flavour of the dish."

"Well," said the steward, "I would not have believed it possible; but by all means let him have the things he asks for, and see how he will manage to prepare the breakfast."

As it was found that the dwarf could not reach up to the table, a slab of marble was laid across two chairs, and all the things he asked for were set upon it. Steward, head cook and all the rest of the servants stood around and watched in amazement the clever, cleanly and brisk manner in which he prepared the food. When he had mixed everything, he ordered the pots to be placed upon the fire and allowed to boil until he said they were to be taken off. Then he began to count "One, two, three," and so on right up to five hundred, and then he cried, "Stop! off with the pots!"

They were immediately taken off the fire, and the dwarf begged the head cook to taste the contents.

A golden spoon was brought and the head cook approached the stove, lifted the lid of one of the pots, helped himself to a spoonful of soup, then, closing his eyes, smacked his lips with pleasure and enjoyment.

"Delicious," he murmured, "by the Duke's head, it is delicious. Steward, will you not taste it?"

The Steward tasted both soup and patties, and then stroked his waistcoat gently with delight. "Head cook," said he, "you are an experienced and first-rate cook, but never have you made such soup or such patties."

The head cook tasted the food again, then he reverently shook the dwarf by the hand. "Little one," said he, "you are a master of your craft. That pinch of trencher-man's herb has given the patties an extra flavour that renders them quite perfect."

At this moment the Duke's special attendant came to say that his master was ready for his breakfast, so the food was served up in silver dishes. The head cook, however, took the little man into his room and was about to have a talk with him, when a message came from the Duke desiring his attendance.

He dressed himself in his best clothes and hastened into his master's presence.

The Duke was looking extremely pleased. He had finished every morsel of the food set before him and was wiping his beard as the head cook entered.

"Cook," said he, "I have always been well satisfied with your cooking and with the work of those under you; but tell me, who prepared my breakfast this morning? I declare it has never been so well served since I sat upon the throne of my fathers. I wish to know the cook's name, so that I may reward him with a few ducats."

"My lord, it is a most wonderful story," answered the head cook, and proceeded to tell his master about the dwarf who had arrived that morning and who had insisted upon being engaged as a cook. The Duke was much surprised, and sent for Jacob and questioned him closely as to his name, where he came from, and so on.

Poor Jacob could not very well own that he had been bewitched and changed into a squirrel, but he was not far from the truth when he said he was now without parents and that he had learnt cooking from an old woman. The Duke did not urge him to say

more, being much taken up with staring at the strange figure and features of his new cook. "If you will serve me," he said, "I will pay you fifty ducats a year, give you a fine robe and two pairs of breeches. Your duties will be to cook my breakfast every morning, order and superintend the preparation of my dinner, and take over the entire management of the kitchen. As I always prefer to name my servants myself, I shall give you the name of Long-Nose, and your position will be that of second head cook."

Long-Nose fell at the feet of his new master, kissed them, and vowed to serve him faithfully.

The little fellow was thus provided for, and he certainly did honour to his position, for the Duke was a different man from the time the dwarf entered his service. Before that time he had been in the habit of throwing the plates and dishes at the head of the cook who did not manage to please him; indeed, on one occasion he had flung a calf's foot at his head cook because it was not sufficiently tender, and, catching the poor man on the forehead had hurt him so much that for three days he had to keep his bed. It is true the Duke always paid for his acts of temper afterwards with a handful of ducats, but, nevertheless, his cooks were wont to set the dishes before him in fear and with trembling hands. But since the dwarf had been in the house all had been changed. The master took five meals a day instead of three, in order to thoroughly appreciate the skill of his little servant, and never had he been dissatisfied yet, but had found everything served to him both novel and excellent.

He was always in a good temper and grew fatter day by day.

Sometimes as he sat at table he would send for his head cook and Jacob and bid them share the delicious food set before him, which was considered a very great honour indeed.

The dwarf was the wonder of the whole city. The head cook constantly received entreaties from various personages to be allowed to witness the dwarf's cooking, and some of the most distinguished men in the State asked and received permission from the Duke to allow their cooks to take lessons from the little man. They paid him well for the instructions they received, but Long-Nose divided the money between all the other cooks, for he did not wish them to become jealous of him.

Two whole years the dwarf passed in the Duke's service and was well content with the treatment he received. It was only the thought of his estrangement from his parents that gave him the least unhappiness. Nothing out of the common had happened to him until the following occurrence took place.

He was a better hand at a bargain than most, always seeing at a glance which were the best goods on sale, and for this reason, whenever he had the time, he used to go to market himself.

One morning he went to the goose fair to buy geese. He was no longer greeted with scorn and laughter, for everyone knew him to be the Duke's favourite cook, and every good wife with geese to sell thought herself lucky if his long nose turned in her direction.

He went up and down the market-place, and at length purchased three live geese which were just the size he required. He lifted the basket in which they were placed upon his broad shoulders and turned towards home.

It struck him as somewhat strange that only two of the geese cackled and gabbled as geese are wont to do; the third was silent, except when she heaved a sigh that sounded almost human.

"The creature must be ill," he said aloud. "I had better cook her quickly before she gets worse."

Then to his astonishment the goose answered quite plainly—

"Long-Nose, look thee,
If thou cook me,
No good 'twill do,
The deed thou'lt rue."

Frightened out of his wits, Long-Nose set down the cage, and the goose looked at him with her beautiful wise eyes and sighed.

"There, there," said the dwarf, "have no fear, I would not harm such a wonderful bird as yourself, for it is not once in a lifetime that one meets a goose that can talk. I wager you have not always worn feathers; I myself have been bewitched, and turned into a squirrel, and I expect it is the same with you."

"You are right," said the goose. "Alas! I did not always bear this humble form, and at my birth who would have dared prophecy that Mimi, the daughter of the great magician Wetterbock, would end her days in a Duke's kitchen."

THE DWARF LONG-NOSE

"They told each other their sad stories"
(P. 143)

"Set your mind at rest, dear Miss Mimi," said the dwarf consolingly; "so sure as I am an honest fellow and second cook to his Highness, no one shall do you any harm. I will have a coop placed for you in my own apartment and you shall have as much food as you require and I will devote all my spare time to you. The rest of the kitchen servants will be told that I am fattening you on some particular herbs to give you a specially good flavour, and I will take the first opportunity of setting you at liberty."

The goose thanked him with tears in her eyes, and the dwarf took means to provide for her as he had promised. She was placed in a wicker cage and fed by Long-Nose alone, and he took care, instead of giving her the ordinary food required by geese, to serve her with dainty cakes and sweets. As often as he could he sat and talked to her and tried to comfort her. They told each other their sad stories, and in this way Long-Nose learned that Mimi was the daughter of the great magician Wetterbock, who lived on the island of Gothland. He had quarrelled with a very wicked fairy, who had managed to outwit him and, in revenge, to change Mimi into a goose, and bring her far away from her home.

The dwarf in return told her all his adventures, and she said: "I am not altogether ignorant of magic myself, having learnt some things from my father. What you tell me about the quarrel over the herb basket and your sudden transformation on smelling a certain herb proves to me that the old woman used some herb in her enchantment, and if you are

able to find that herb you will probably regain your natural form." This was small comfort for Long-Nose, for he had not the least idea where he could find such a herb. Still, he thanked her, and tried to be a little more hopeful too.

It was just at this time that the Duke had a visit from a neighbouring Prince, a friend of his.

He sent for Long-Nose and said to him: "Now is the time to prove if you serve me faithfully, and are a true master of your art. This Prince, who is now my guest, lives better than anyone I know, except myself. He prides himself upon the first-rate cooks he keeps and he is a very knowing man. Now be careful that my table is served daily with such dishes that may arouse his astonishment and envy. Never let the same kind of food appear twice during his visit. You may ask my treasurer for as much money as you require to purchase materials for your cooking. If you wanted to baste your roasts with gold and diamonds you should have them. I would sooner beggar myself than have to blush for the quality of my viands."

The dwarf bowed and promised the Duke that he would so manage that the dainty palate of the Prince could not fail to approve of the dishes set before him.

The little cook exerted all his skill and spared neither his master's treasures nor himself. All day long he was enveloped in a cloud of steam, out of which issued his voice giving orders to the other cooks and scullions. It would take too long to recount all the delicious foods he cooked, suffice it to

say that for a whole fortnight the Duke and his guest were served as they had never been served before, and a smile of enjoyment was constantly to be seen upon the face of the royal visitor.

At the end of that time the Duke sent for the dwarf and presented him to the Prince, asking him, at the same time, what he thought of him as a cook.

"You are indeed a wonderful cook," said the noble visitor to the little man. "During the whole of my stay here I have not had the same kind of dish twice. But I must own I have been surprised that you have never tempted our appetites with the queen of all dainties, a Souzeraine pasty."

The dwarf was rather upset, for it chanced that he had never heard of this before, but he managed to hide his discomposure.

"Sir," said he, "I had hoped you were to honour this court with your presence for a long time yet, and therefore did I delay setting this dish before you, for with what better dish could a cook serve you, as a parting greeting, than with that of a Souzeraine pasty?"

"Oh! indeed," said the Duke smiling, "so I suppose you were waiting for me to leave the world for ever before giving me the parting greeting, for I have never so much as heard of this pasty, much less tasted it. But we will wait for it no longer; to morrow morning we shall expect you to serve it up to us for breakfast."

"As my lord wills," answered the dwarf, and bowing low he left their presence. He was terribly

upset, for he had not the least idea how to make the pasty. He went to his room and there wept and bemoaned his sad fate.

But the goose Mimi came to him and, after enquiring the cause of his sorrow, said: "Dry your tears, for I think I can help you in this matter. This dish was frequently set upon my father's table and I know pretty well how it was concocted. Even if I cannot tell you every single ingredient, you will no doubt flavour the pie so deliciously that the Prince will not detect any omission."

She then proceeded to name to the dwarf the various ingredients required.

He was ready to jump for joy, and blessed the day upon which he had purchased the goose, and then set to work to make the pasty.

He made a little trial one to begin with and it tasted delicious. He gave the head cook a piece to taste and he could not say enough in praise of it.

The following morning he made a large one and sent it to table decorated with wreaths of flowers. He dressed himself in his state robes and entered the dining hall just as the carver had served the Duke and his guest with slices of the pasty.

The Duke took a large mouthful and then cast his eyes up towards the ceiling. "Ah!" said he, as soon as he could speak, "this has been truly called the queen of pasties, and as for my cook, he is the king of cooks. What say you, dear friend?"

The guest took one or two mouthfuls before answering, and then, having well tasted the flavour, he said rather scornfully as he pushed away his plate:

"It is as I thought! It is an excellent pasty no doubt, but not the Souzeraine."

The Duke frowned and reddened with anger—"Dog of a dwarf," cried he, "how dare you treat me so? I have a good mind to have your head chopped off as a punishment for your bad cookery."

"My lord, I assure you I have made the pasty according to all the rules of the art of cookery," replied the dwarf trembling.

"It is false, you rascal," replied the Duke, kicking him away. "If it were right my guest would not say it was wrong. I have a good mind to have you made into mincemeat and baked in a pie yourself."

"Have mercy," cried the poor little man, prostrating himself before the royal guest and clasping his feet in his arms. "I pray you tell me what I have left out of the pasty that it fails to suit your palate? Do not condemn me to death for a handful of meat and flour."

"It will be of little assistance to you to know, my dear Long-Nose," answered the Prince with a smile, "I was quite certain yesterday that you would not be able to make this pasty as well as my cook can, because the chief requisite is a herb which does not grow in this country. It is known as "The Cook's Delight," and without this the pasty is practically tasteless, and your master will never eat it with the same pleasure that I can in my own country."

Then the Duke flew into the most terrible rage—"I vow by my honour that either you shall taste this pasty to-morrow morning, exactly as you are

accustomed to have it, or else the head of this fellow shall pay for his blunder. Go, dog of a dwarf, I give you four-and-twenty hours to accomplish it in."

The poor dwarf went to his room and told this fresh trouble to the goose.

"Come, take heart," said she, "fortunately I know every herb that grows and I am sure I can find this one for you. It is a happy thing that it chances to be a new moon to-night, for only at the time of the new moon does this plant grow. But tell me, are there any ancient chestnut trees near the palace?"

"Oh! yes," replied the dwarf, with a lighter heart. "Two hundred paces from the palace, beside the lake, there is quite a large group of chestnut trees; but why do you ask?"

"Because the herb is only found at the root of very old chestnut trees," answered Mimi. "Let us lose no time, but go and search for what you require. Take me under your arm and put me down when we have reached the spot, and I will help you search."

He did as she bade him; but as he would have passed out of the gateway of the palace, the sentry barred the way with his lance. "My good Long-Nose," said he, "I have the strictest orders not to let you out of the house. Your end has come, I fear."

"But surely I can go into the garden," replied the dwarf. "Be so good as to send one of your comrades to enquire if I may go into the garden to search for herbs."

The sentry did so and permission was given, for the garden had such high walls surrounding it that it seemed impossible for him to escape.

As soon as he was in the open he placed Mimi carefully on the ground and she at once began to run towards the lake on the banks of which the chestnut

The goose sought in vain for the herb. (P. 149.)

trees grew. Long-Nose followed her with a sinking heart, for he had already made up his mind that, if the herb could not be found, he would drown himself in the lake rather than allow his head to be cut off.

The goose sought in vain for the herb, she left not a blade of grass unturned, and at length she

began to cry from sympathy. She would not give up the search until evening began to fall, and the darkness made it difficult to distinguish any surrounding objects. Just as they were about to abandon the search the dwarf looked across the lake and then cried out: "Look, at the other side of the lake is a huge old chestnut tree. Let us go and search there, perhaps good fortune blooms yonder."

The goose waddled and flew and waddled and flew, the dwarf hurrying after her as fast as his little legs would let him, until at length they had reached the other side of the lake. The chestnut tree cast a vast shade and it was so dark all around that it was difficult to distinguish anything, but suddenly the goose gave a cry of joy and flapped her wings with delight.

She thrust her head into the long grass and plucked something which she deftly offered in her bill to Long-Nose. "This is the herb," said she, "and it grows here in such quantities you will always have a plentiful supply."

The dwarf looked at the herb thoughtfully. A sweet scent assailed his nostrils and reminded him of the scene of his transformation; the stalk, too, of the plant was of a bluish-green colour and it bore a bright red flower, flecked with yellow.

"Mimi," said he, "by great good fortune I do believe we have chanced upon the very herb that changed me from a squirrel into the creature I am now. Shall I make a trial of it?"

"Not yet," replied the goose. "Take a handful of the herbs with you and let us go back to your

room. There you can collect your money and all that you possess and then we will try the power of the herb."

They returned to the dwarf's room, he with a heart beating loudly whith excitement. He took between fifty and sixty ducats he had saved, and tied them up in a bundle with some of his clothes, then saying: "May good fortune aid me to be rid of my burden," he thrust his nose into the bunch of herbs and sniffed their fragrance. Then his limbs and joints began to crack and stretch, he could feel his head rising from between his shoulders, squinting down his nose he could see it growing smaller and smaller, his back and chest straightened themselves out, and his legs became longer.

The goose looked on in astonishment. "Oh! how tall and handsome you are," she cried, "there is not the faintest resemblance left to the dwarf Long-Nose."

As for Jacob, he was beside himself with joy; but he did not forget the thanks he owed to Mimi. His first impulse was to go to his parents, but gratitude urged him to suppress this wish.

"But for you," he said to Mimi, "I might have retained my hideous form all the days of my life, or I might even have lost my life. Now is the time to repay my debt. I will take you straightway to your father, whose magic powers will at once enable him to disenchant you." The goose wept tears of joy and accepted his offer gratefully.

Jacob passed the sentries safely, for they had only been ordered to bar the way to the dwarf Long-Nose.

With Mimi beneath his arm he very soon reached the sea-shore, and before long her home was in sight.

The great Wetterbock soon turned the goose into a charming young lady, and, having loaded her rescuer with valuable gifts, bade him farewell.

Jacob hastened home, and his parents were only too delighted to accept the handsome young man as their long-lost son.

With the presents he had received from Wetterbock he was able to purchase a shop, and he became a very rich man and lived happily all his days.

But his disappearance from the Duke's palace caused a great hubbub. When the morning came on which the Duke was to fulfil his vow and behead the dwarf if he had not found the herb, lo! the dwarf himself was missing.

The Prince declared the Duke had allowed him to escape to avoid losing such a splendid cook, and said he had broken his word.

They quarrelled so violently that a war ensued, which is known in all histories of those lands as "The Herb War," and when at length peace was declared it was called "The Pasty Peace," and at the reconciliation feast the Prince's cook served up a Souzeraine pasty, to which the Duke did full justice.

ABNER,
THE JEW WHO SAW NOTHING.

Abner, the Jew.

THIS is the story of Abner, the Jew, who by reason of his great powers of observation, instead of benefiting himself by his sagacity, brought himself into dire straits and well-nigh lost his life.

It is well known that all Jews are observant and crafty; Abner was no exception to the rule.

He was strolling one evening beyond the gateway of Morocco, glancing from right to left in case by chance he could see anything likely to be used to his advantage. He was feeling particularly well pleased with himself, for he had done a very good day's business. He had managed to sell a sick slave for a good sum of money, knowing he would prove of little value to the purchaser, and he had bought a camel-load of gum and spices for a very low price, and expected to make a large profit, so he smiled and stroked his beard and paced up and down in a very happy frame of mind.

Presently he heard the sound of people running and shouting and a number of the Emperor's grooms, with the Master of the Horse at their head, came along. They ran here and there in wild disorder, evidently searching eagerly for something or someone who was lost.

"Hullo, you dog of a Jew," cried the Master of the Horse, "have you seen anything of the Emperor's horse, a fine creature ready saddled and bridled? He has run away and is lost."

"Ah," answered Abner thoughtfully, "he was one of the swiftest horses you could meet, with a small, delicately-shaped hoof, silver shoes, his mane shone like gold, fifteen hands high, a tail three feet and a half in length, and his bridle bit is of pure gold."

"Yes, yes," cried the Master of the Horse, "you have described him exactly; tell me where we can find the Emperor's horse."

"But I have seen no horse," replied Abner, smiling craftily, "how therefore can I tell you where he is?"

The Master of the Horse was about to insist upon Abner explaining this apparent contradiction, when by a strange coincidence another event occurred which prevented him.

A troop of black slaves came running towards them, crying aloud, "Hath any one seen the Empress' lap-dog? Aline, Aline, where art thou?"

"Is it not a small spaniel with a long coat, a feathery tail, and lame in the right foreleg?"

"Yes, yes," cried the slaves, "of a certainty thou hast described the dog. The Empress is in a swoon

ABNER, THE JEW WHO SAW NOTHING

"They ran here and there in wild disorder" (p. 154)

on account of the loss of her favourite and will certainly not recover until Aline is restored to her; tell us, therefore, where thou hast seen the dog!"

"I have seen no dog," replied Abner, "neither was I so much as aware that our Empress possessed one."

Then both the stable men and the slaves of the harem fell to abusing Abner, the shameless Jew, who did not scruple to make game of his Emperor and Empress. They seized him and dragged him before the Emperor and recounted all that had happened, suggesting that most certainly the Jew had seen and stolen the animals in question.

The Jew continued to protest his innocence, but all in vain; by way of a beginning he was ordered and received fifty strokes with the bastinado upon the soles of his feet, and after that he was assured that if the horse and the little dog were not recovered he would pay for their loss with his life.

The palace was still in a high state of commotion, when a black slave came running in, breathless and exhausted, but bearing the good news that both horse and dog had been found.

The horse, fed on the best corn and oats in the Emperor's stable, had yet preferred his freedom and a bite of grass in a green meadow, where he had been found quietly grazing.

As for the little dog, he had been found in the company of a number of mongrels whose society was quite unfit for such an aristocratic little animal as an Empress' pet.

The Emperor now demanded an explanation from

Abner as to how he had been able to describe two animals he had never seen.

The Jew bowed low before the Emperor and made answer: "I was taking a walk in the cool of the evening in a little wood, where the soil was sandy and loose; presently I noticed the prints of small paws, the right fore-paw print making a slighter impression in the sand than the others, therefore I knew the little animal was lame. One each side of the fore-paw prints there was a slight trail in the sand which proved the animal's ears had been long and sweeping the ground, and it was impossible to avoid knowing that the tail was long and feathery, for, in an access of joy, probably at the freedom he was enjoying, he had wagged his tail to and fro, and brushed the sand aside. Therefore I knew to a nicety the kind of dog that had passed that way.

"As far as the horse is concerned, as I was walking upon another path in the wood I noticed the tracks of a horse's hoofs. I examined them and found them small and delicate, such as only a highly-bred horse's hoofs would be; from the distance apart I judged that the horse had been galloping at a great rate, and I noticed a stone against which he had evidently struck one hoof and left a small silver shaving, therefore I knew he was shod with silver shoes. The path down which I was walking was seven feet wide and the palms on each side had had the dust brushed from their leaves. 'Ah!' said I, 'the horse swished his tail to and fro and swept the palms with it on each side of him, therefore the tail must have been at least three and a half feet in length.' The branches of the trees beneath

which I was walking were some five feet from the ground and I saw that leaves had freshly fallen from them, no doubt brushed off by the horse in his flight, therefore I guessed him to be fifteen hands high. On the bushes I saw traces of golden-brown horse hair, caught here and there, and I knew then the colour of the horse that had passed that way.

"As I left the cover of the bushes I noticed a tiny mark of gold on a rock, and guessed that the runaway had had a golden bit between its teeth, which it had rubbed against the stone as it bounded past."

"Now, by the beard of the Prophet," cried the delighted Emperor, "that is what I call good eyesight, and no mistake. I only wish my master of the Hounds and the Chief of the Police had such eyes for a trail. Now, Master Jew, it is but fair we should reward you on account of what you have innocently suffered, and for the sake of the sagacity you have shown. As you should have paid me a hundred sequins, you shall be pardoned fifty on account of the fifty strokes you received. Now open your purse and pay me the other fifty, but remember to beware in future of how you make a laughing stock of your Emperor: if you wish to ridicule anyone, the pain in your feet may serve to remind you it would be best to make a butt of one of lesser degree!"

THE STORY OF ALMANSOR.

Almansor in the camp of the Franks.
(P. 164)

THERE was once a Sheik of Alexandria named Ali Banu. Although he was good and generous, rich and clever, he was a very unhappy man, for he had the misfortune to lose his only son when he was but ten years of age, and the joy of his father's heart.

It was at the time when the Franks overran the country like a pack of hungry wolves. They had conquered Alexandria and had pushed their way further and further, and attacked the Mamelukes.

The Sheik was a wise man and tried therefore to keep the peace with them, but they grudged him his

wealth and so made an excuse to quarrel with him. They pretended that he had been supplying the Mamelukes secretly with weapons, horses, and stores, and so they seized his young son Kairam and carried him away to their camp as a hostage.

The Sheik offered ransom money, but the Franks would not part with the boy, because they believed that if they kept him long enough the father would be glad to pay even the most extortionate price for his release.

But suddenly they were recalled to their own land, and as they had not time to bargain with the Sheik before embarking, they carried the boy Kairam with them.

The boy's mother died of a broken heart and the poor old man never ceased to grieve for his son. Every year, upon the anniversary of the day his son was captured, he made a rule of setting at liberty twelve slaves. In order to divert his mind from his sorrow, the twelve who were about to be liberated each had to recount to him a story, and when this had been done they were released.

Upon one of these anniversaries some ten or eleven years after Kairam's abduction, the Sheik took his seat on the floor, for his mourning for his son forbade him to sit upon the carpet of joy, his friends and acquaintance, who had come to comfort him, sat near him, and close beside him was Mustapha, the Dervish, who was his closest friend and had been his son's instructor.

The slaves who were about to be released were

gathered before him; some were old and some young, but the one who called for the most attention was a tall and very handsome young man, whom the Sheik had purchased for a large sum of money, only a few days previously, of a slave trader from Tunis.

When several of the slaves had told their stories and it came to this young man's turn, he arose, bowed to the Sheik, and said in a clear voice:

"My Lord, the stories that have already been told are so much more interesting than any I could tell relating to myself, that with your permission I will recount to you the adventures of one of my friends.

"Upon the slave ship which brought me from Algeria there was a young man of about my own age who seemed to have been born to a better position than that in which I found him.

"The rest of the unfortunate beings upon the ship were either of a low class, so that I did not care to mix with them, or else spoke a language I did not understand, and so, whenever I had any spare time, I spent it with this young man. His name was Almansor, and, by the manner in which he spoke, I judged him to be an Egyptian.

"We took great pleasure in each other's society, and one day we told each other our stories, and his seemed certainly more interesting than mine.

"Almansor's father held a distinguished position in an Egyptian town. He spent the days of his childhood surrounded by every comfort, although he was not spoilt or allowed to become effeminate, for his father was a wise man and trained him to be good and

virtuous, and gave him for his instructor a very learned man who taught him all that a youth should know. Almansor was about ten years of age when the Franks came from over the sea and made war upon his nation.

"The boy's father evidently incurred the displeasure of the Franks, for one day they came and demanded his wife as a hostage and a guarantee of his good intentions towards them, and upon his refusing to give her up they tore his son from him by force, and carried him away to their camp."

As the young slave recounted this, the Sheik hid his face in his hands and a murmur of displeasure arose in the apartment.

"How could this young man be so foolish as to tell such a story?" the Sheik's friends asked one another. "How can he be so cruel as to open Ali Banu's wounds afresh instead of attempting to heal them? How can he renew his grief instead of trying to allay it?"

The overseer of the slaves was full of anger over the young man's effrontery, and bade him roughly hold his peace, but the slave only showed surprise, and asked the Sheik in what way his story had displeased him. So the Sheik raised his head from his hands and said: "Calm yourselves, my friends. This young man has been but three days beneath my roof and quite possibly does not know of my sorrowful history. It is possible, considering the cruelties the Franks perpetrate, there may be another story similar to mine, or even this Almansor might be—" The Sheik did not finish his sentence, but bade the slave continue his story.

"The young Almansor," said he, "was, as I said, carried away to the camp of the Franks, where he did not fare so badly, for one of the generals took a fancy to him, and was amused at the boy's answers to his questions, which were interpreted to him by a dragoman. He saw that he was well cared for and had all the food required, but that did not compensate the boy for the loss of his father and mother.

"He wept bitterly, but his tears did not melt the hard hearts of his captors. When the camp was broken up Almansor hoped he would be sent home, but no, the army moved on and on in pursuit of the Mamelukes, and young Almansor was carried in its train.

"In vain he begged and implored the officers to send him back to his father; they told him he was the only security they had for his father's good faith.

"But all of a sudden a great commotion took place, all the soldiers began packing in great haste, and Almansor heard that the army had been recalled. He felt certain that if the Franks returned to their own country he would be restored to his home, and was happy in the thought of so soon seeing his parents again. The retreat towards the seashore was a hurried one, and Almansor very soon saw the great ships lying at anchor. The soldiers began to embark at once, but by nightfall only a small number were on board. Almansor tried hard to remain awake, for he believed he was to be set free immediately, but in spite of his efforts he fell into a deep sleep. Afterwards he felt sure that the Franks must have drugged him, for he slept so soundly that when he awoke it was broad

daylight, and he found himself in quite a different room to the one in which he had gone to sleep.

"He sprang from his couch, but no sooner touched the floor than he fell down, for the floor seemed to sway up and down, and everything in the room went round and round. He rose and steadied himself by the wall, so that he might be able to get out of the room.

"A most extraordinary splashing and roaring noise was all around him, and he scarcely knew whether he was awake or dreaming, for he had never heard anything like it before. He managed to reach a little staircase and climbed it. What was his horror to see around him nothing but sea and sky, and he discovered that he was on a ship. He wept bitterly and begged to be taken back. He tried to fling himself into the sea in order that he might swim ashore. But the Franks held him fast, and one of the officers ordered him to be brought to him and promised him that, if he were good and obedient, he should be sent home, but told him it had not been possible for them to spare time to take him to his father, and had they left him behind by himself he would have perished miserably.

"But the Franks did not keep their promise, for after many days, when the ship at length reached the shore, it was not in Egypt they landed, but on the coast of France, which was the name of the country they came from. During the voyage and whilst he had been in the camp, Almansor had learnt a good deal of the Frankish language, and he found this very

useful, now that he was in a country where no one understood a word of his language.

"For many days he marched with the army into the interior of the country, and crowds came flocking to see him, for his companions gave out that he was the King of Egypt's son, who had been sent to France to be educated. This they said in order that the people might believe that they had conquered Egypt and made peace with that country.

"At length they reached a very large town, which was the end of the journey. He was handed over to a doctor, who took him into his house and instructed him in the manners and customs of the country.

"First of all he was made to put on different clothing, which felt tight and uncomfortable, and was not nearly so nice to look at as his Egyptian clothes. He was no longer allowed to bow, with his arms crossed upon his breast, when he wished to show his respect to any one. Instead he was taught to raise his large black felt hat with one hand, and make a slight obeisance. He was not allowed to sit cross-legged upon a cushion, as is the pleasant custom in the East, but was made to sit upon a high-legged chair and let his legs hang down. The mode of eating, too, was most trying, for everything he put into his mouth had to be conveyed there by means of a steel fork.

"The doctor was a stern and cruel man who gave the boy no peace. If he forgot and said to a visitor: 'Salem aleicum,' he had a good beating, for he had been taught to say: 'Votre serviteur.' He was not

allowed to speak or write in his own language, and he might even have forgotten his native tongue had it not been for a man who lived in that town, and who was very kind to him.

"This man was very learned and understood a great many Eastern languages, Arabic, Persian, Coptic, and even Chinese, and made a great deal of money by teaching them to other people. He invited Almansor to visit him several times a week, gave him fruit and cakes, and made him feel very much at home. He was a most extraordinary old man, for he ordered clothes for Almansor such as high-class people in Egypt wear, and kept them in a certain room in his house. When Almansor came to visit him he was sent to this room, with a servant, who helped him to dress himself in these garments, and then he was taken into what was called 'The Arabian Hall.'

"This hall was decorated with palms, cedars and all sorts of flowers that grow in Eastern countries. Persian carpets were laid on the floors, and cushions were placed against the walls, but there was no sign of a chair or table. The old professor was seated upon one of the cushions, but he was dressed quite differently to his usual attire. He wore a Turkish turban on his head, a false grey beard that reached to his waist. On his legs he had wide Turkish trousers, and besides this he had a robe made from a brocaded dressing gown, and yellow slippers.

"Although he was of a very peaceable nature, he wore a Turkish sabre, and had a dagger, set with imitation jewels, thrust into his girdle. He

smoked a pipe with a stem at least four feet in length, and was waited upon by servants clad in Eastern attire, with hands and faces coloured dark brown.

"At first Almansor only thought how very curious it all was, but after a while he began to think of what great advantage to him the hours spent with the old man might be. At the doctor's he was forced to converse in the French tongue, but at the old man's house he was encouraged to speak the Egyptian language. On entering he was expected to give the Eastern greeting, to which the old man solemnly responded; then he was told to sit down, and the host conversed with his guest in a mixture of Persian, Arabic and Coptic. He had a servant beside him, who on these occasions was called a slave, and this slave held an enormous dictionary, and whenever the old man was at a loss for a word, he beckoned to the slave to turn over the leaves of the book until he came to the word he wanted, and then he went on talking again.

"The pretended slaves served sherbet and such-like drinks in Turkish drinking-vessels, and if Almansor wanted to please the old man very much he used to tell him that everything looked as it did in his own home in the East. Almansor could read Persian very well, and this was of great use to the old man, for he made the boy read aloud from Persian manuscripts, and repeated the words carefully after him, and so learnt the correct pronunciation.

"These were happy days for poor Almansor, for the professor never sent him away empty-handed, but

THE STORY OF ALMANSOR

The slave held an enormous dictionary (p. 168.)

gave him sometimes money, and sometimes underwear, and other useful things with which the doctor would not provide him. And so he lived for some years in the capital of France, without his longing for home ever growing less. When he was about fifteen years of age something happened which had a great influence upon his fortunes. The Franks, or the French as he was taught to call them, chose for their Emperor the general who had once made a pet of Almansor in Egypt.

"Although Almansor knew that one of the generals had been proclaimed Emperor, he did not know it was the one he had so frequently spoken to before he left his native land.

"One day, when he was crossing one of the bridges which span the wide river flowing through the city, he saw a man, dressed in simple uniform, leaning against the parapet, gazing down into the water.

"The man's features seemed familiar to him and, quickly reviewing the past, he remembered where he had last see him. He was the French general who had been so kind to him in Egypt. He did not know his right name, only the nickname by which the soldiers spoke of him, but, taking courage, he advanced towards him, crossed his arms upon his breast, and said 'Salem aleicum, Little Corporal.'

"The man turned in astonishment, stared hard at the youth for a few moments, and then said: 'Is it possible, *you* here, Almansor? How is your father, and how are things going on in Egypt? How do you come to be in France?'

"Almansor could not restrain his tears. Weeping

bitterly, he made answer: 'Then you did not know that your dogs of countrymen had brought me here? Alas! Little Corporal, it is many a long year since I saw my native land.'

"'I trust,' said the man, with an angry frown, 'that they did not bring you away from Egypt.'

"'Indeed they did,' replied Almansor; 'an officer, moved by compassion for me, paid for my board and keep at the house of a doctor, who beats and ill-treats me, and almost starves me to death. But oh! how glad I am I have met you, for now I know that you will help me.'

"'How can I help you?' asked the man smiling.

"'Well,' replied Almansor, 'you may be sure that I am not going to ask you for money, for I am sure you have little to spare. I remember that, although you were a general, when you were so kind to me, you were poor, and were never able to afford such fine clothes as the others, and I can see by your shabby hat and coat that you are not much better off now, but, as you know, your people have lately chosen a new Emperor, and as he was one of your generals it may chance that at least you know someone who is acquainted with him.'

"'And if I do, what then?' replied the man.

"'I want you to say a good word for me, Little Corporal, and get the Emperor to grant me my liberty. It would not cost very much money to send me home across the sea; but whatever you do, you must promise to keep this a secret from the doctor and the Arabian professor.'

"'Who may the Arabian professor be?' the soldier asked.

"'A most extraordinary man, but I will tell you of him some other time.' replied Almansor. 'But if these two were to hear of it they would most certainly

"Is it possible, you here, Almansor?" (P. 171.)

prevent my leaving France. And will you promise then to find some one to speak for me to the Emperor?'

"'Come with me and I may perhaps be able to help you now,' said his friend.

"'Now?' cried the youth, 'that I cannot do, for

I shall get a good beating from the doctor if I do not hurry home."

"'What have you in that basket?' asked the man, laying his hand upon Almansor's shoulder.

"The boy blushed with shame and hesitated, but said finally: 'Little Corporal, it is not here with me as it was in my own home. I am forced now to perform the duties assigned to the lowest of my father's slaves. The doctor is a miserly man, and every day he sends me to a market which is at some distance from our house, because I can get things cheaper there than they are in our part of the town. Look at these few herrings, this handful of salad, and this little pat of butter; every day I have to tramp miles in order to buy such things. Oh! if only my father knew it.'

"The soldier appeared moved by the boy's distress. 'Come with me,' he said, 'and I promise you the doctor shall not punish you, even if he has to go without herrings or salad. So take courage and come.'

"He took Almansor by the hand and led him along with him, and although the boy's heart beat loudly when he thought of the doctor, yet he could not but feel great confidence in the man beside him and so he decided to do as he advised. So he trotted along, his basket on his arm, sorely perplexed, however to notice how everyone raised their hats to them, and stood staring after them. He asked his companion what it meant, but he only laughed and gave no answer.

"At length they reached a splendid palace, which

the man entered: 'Do you live here, Little Corporal?' asked Almansor.

"'This is my dwelling-place, certainly,' replied the soldier, 'and I am going to introduce you to my wife.'

"'Ah! but you have a splendid home,' replied Almansor, 'I suppose the Emperor gives you your quarters free?'

"'It is true I owe these quarters to the Emperor,' answered his companion. They mounted a wide staircase and reached a magnificent anteroom, where he was told to put down his basket, and then they went into a most beautiful apartment, where a lady was sitting upon a sofa. The soldier spoke to her in a language the boy did not understand, and they both laughed a good deal, and then the lady asked him, in the French tongue, a number of questions about Egypt, and then the Little Corporal said: 'I have come to the conclusion that the best thing we can do is to take you straight to the Emperor, and for you to tell him your story.'

"Almansor was frightened to face such a great man; but he thought of his home and the misery he now endured and took courage. 'I will go,' he said bravely, 'but tell me, Little Corporal, must I prostrate myself before him, shall I place my forehead to the ground? Tell me how I ought to behave.'

"The soldier and his wife laughed heartily and assured him this was not necessary.

"'Has he a very fierce and majestic appearance?' he asked again, 'has he a long beard? Will his eyes flash fire? Tell me how I shall recognise him.'

"'I would rather not describe him to you, Almansor,' answered his companion, 'but I will tell you how you may recognise the Emperor. All who are in the room will take off their hats respectfully, the Emperor alone will remain covered.'

"He led Almansor towards the Emperor's reception room and the boy began to tremble all over as they approached the door.

"A servant opened it and they were in the presence of some thirty men, all of whom had ranged themselves in a semi-circle. They wore magnificent uniforms, and gold lace and glittering orders sparkled upon their breasts. Almansor thought his plainly-dressed companion must be lower in rank than anyone present. They all stood bare-headed and Almansor began to search for one who wore a hat. In vain, it seemed to him that the Emperor could not be present, for all carried their hats in their hands. Then his glance fell upon his companion, and lo! he was wearing his hat.

"The boy was astounded and put up his hand to his own head to remove the hat he had forgotten until then: 'Salem aleicum, Little Corporal,' he said. 'I know that I am not Emperor of France, so it is not becoming for me to remain covered. But now you are the only person wearing a hat, can it be that *you* are the Emperor?'

"'You have guessed it at length,' he replied, 'and besides being the Emperor, I am your friend. You must not blame me for your misfortunes, but rather put them down to a succession of unfortunate

circumstances, and rest assured I will send you home in the first ship that is sailing to your country. Now run away to my wife and tell her about the Arabian professor or anything else you like. I will send the herrings and the salad to the doctor, but you will remain in the palace as my guest.'

"Thus spoke the man who was the Emperor. Almansor fell upon his knees and kissed his hand, begging his forgiveness for not having recognised him, but assuring him that he did not in the least resemble an Emperor.'

"'You are right,' replied the Emperor laughingly, 'but you see I have only been an Emperor for a few days, so that I have not had time for imperial majesty to stamp itself upon my features.' Then he nodded for the boy to go.

"From that time Almansor lived very happily. He was allowed to visit the Arabian professor, but he did not see the doctor again.

"After the lapse of a few weeks the Emperor sent for him and told him that a ship was about to sail for Egypt. He loaded him with presents and money, and sent him to the coast; but not before the boy had expressed his deep gratitude and affection to the one who had shown him so much kindness.

"But alas! Almansor's troubles were not yet over, Allah would not yet permit him to see his native shore. The French nation was then at war with another Frankish people, the English. These English captured every French ship they could, and so it happened that on the sixth day the ship on

which Almansor sailed was surrounded by a number of English ships, and was obliged to surrender. All the crew were transferred to another smaller vessel and, as ill luck would have it, this small vessel became detached from the rest of the fleet during a storm. Now there are robbers upon the high seas just as there are in the desert, and the small ship was seized by a pirate ship from Tunis, and all the crew were sent to Algiers and sold as slaves. Almansor was not so badly off as the Christians, because he was a Mussulman and a true Believer, but notwithstanding he began to abandon all hope of ever seeing his father's house again. He had been purchased by a rich man, and for five years he lived with him, cultivating his garden and rearing his flowers. But suddenly the rich man died and left no near heirs, so that his property was divided up, his slaves were shared out, and Almansor fell into the hands of a slave-dealer who was just fitting out a ship to carry his slaves to another port, in order to sell them for a better price. I chanced to be one of this dealer's slaves and was taken upon the same ship with Almansor. We soon made friends and he told me his wonderful adventures, But, when we landed, I was a witness of Allah's goodness and merciful guidance, for it was upon Almansor's native shore that we disembarked, and it was in the market place of his native town that we were publicly sold, and oh! my Lord, it was his own dear father who bought him."

The Sheik Ali Banu had listened thoughtfully to

the slave's story, but the conclusion did not quite seem to satisfy him.

"The young man would be about one-and-twenty, you say?" he enquired.

"Yes, my Lord, my own age," answered the slave.

"And what do you say is the name of his native town?"

"If I was not mistaken it was Alexandria," was the reply.

"Alexandria!" cried the Sheik. "Then it was my son. Did he ever call himself Kairam? Had he dark eyes and brown hair?"

"Yes, my lord," said the slave, "and sometimes he called himself Kairam and *not* Almansor."

"But tell me," said the old man, "are you sure his own father bought him, did he assure you it was so? Because if this is the case he cannot be my son."

The slave answered: "I heard him thank Allah for having brought him back to his own city, and when an aged and distinguished-looking man approached him and bought him he whispered to me: "My misfortunes are at an end, for it is my own father who has bought me."

"Alas! it was *not* my son," cried the Sheik in tones of deep grief.

Then the young man could contain himself no longer. Tears of joy rushed to his eyes and he threw himself at the Sheik's feet and cried: "But it was your son, Kairam, or Almansor, for it was you who purchased him."

The Sheik stood speechless, staring at the youth's

handsome face. "Mustapha," said he to the old Dervish, "my eyes are dimmed with a veil of tears so that I can see nothing. Tell me, does this youth indeed resemble my son Kairam?"

The aged Dervish approached and, laying his hand upon the young man's forehead, said: "Kairam, what was the text I taught you the very day you were taken away to the Frankish camp?"

"My dear master," said the youth, pressing his lips to the Dervish's hand, "it was this: 'He who loves Allah and has a good conscience, though he were in the desert of misery, is never alone, for he has two companions who walk beside him and comfort him.'"

Then the Dervish placed the young man in the Sheik's arms. "Take him," he said, "for so surely as you have mourned your son as lost, so surely is he found again."

The Sheik was beside himself with joy, and all present joined in his delight for they loved him dearly and shared in his happiness as they had shared his grief.

Once more the house resounded with songs of joy and mirth, as it had been wont to do. Again the youth was pressed to tell his story with still more minute details, and all united to praise the Arabian professor and the Emperor and everyone who had shown kindness towards the young man.

The gathering did not break up until quite late at night, and before they left the Sheik presented each of his friends with some rich gift, that he might always have cause to remember the joyful day.

THE STORY OF THE FLORIN.

Stormy Weather Zollern.
(P. 182.)

IN Upper Suabia stands to this very day the ruins of a castle that was once the most stately in the whole neighbourhood, namely, that of Hohenzollern. It is built upon the summit of a steep hill, from the rugged heights of which the surrounding country can be viewed far and wide. But, further than the eye can travel, throughout the most remote parts of Germany, the race of Hohenzollern was ever known, feared and respected.

Hundreds of years ago there lived in this solitary stronghold one of the race who, it is true, was feared, but also distrusted by all, although it could not be actually said of him that he oppressed his subjects or lived at open enmity with his neighbours.

Few besides the inhabitants of the castle had ever heard him speak a civil word, for if he rode through the valley and chanced to meet anyone who raised

his cap and said: "Good evening, Count, what fine weather we are having," he would reply in surly tones, "Rubbish!" or "I know that already."

But if anyone neglected his work, or if perchance the Count met a peasant driving his cart on a narrow road so that he could not pass quickly, then a perfect storm of fury burst from his lips. He did not ill-treat the object of his wrath, but he would rage and storm so wildly that folks had given him the nickname of "Stormy Weather Zollern."

Stormy Weather had a wife who was the direct opposite of himself; for she was as mild and gentle as a May day, and her kind words and pleasant smile often went a good way towards healing the breach between her husband and the neighbours he offended. She was good to the poor and would climb down the steep hill-side, summer and winter alike, to go to the aid of anyone in distress. Sometimes she met the Count when she was thus employed, and he would glance at her and say: "Nonsense, nonsense, why don't you mind your own business?"

Many a less loving wife would have ceased to love such a disagreeable, cross-grained fellow, but not so the Lady Hedwig. She would try to coax the Count into a better temper, or make excuses for him when there were really none to be made.

They had one son, a sweet little baby whom the Count professed to care very little about. He never saw him but once a week, and that was on a Sunday afternoon, when the nurse carried the baby in her arms. When he said "Father" for the first time, the

Count gave the Nurse a florin; but he took no further notice of the child.

On the little one's third birthday the Count ordered him to wear his first pair of breeches, and had him clothed in velvet and silk, and very pretty he looked. Then he ordered his own and a second very fine spirited horse to be brought to the gateway and, taking the child on his arm, began to descend the steep staircase, his spurs rattling and clanging as he went. The Lady Hedwig made it a rule never to enquire where he was going or when he was returning when he rode out, but now her anxiety for her child urged her to.

"Are you going riding?" The Count did not answer, so she said: "Why are you taking the little one with you? Cuno is going for a walk with me."

"Rubbish," said the Count, and went on down the steps until he reached the courtyard. Then he put the child upon the horse's back and tied him firmly on with a broad scarf, flung himself upon his own steed and trotted out of the castle gates, taking the reins of the little boy's horse in his own hands. At first the little one seemed to enjoy riding down the hill with his father. He clapped his hands and laughed and shook his horse's mane to make it go faster, and the Count was pleased and said once or twice: "You will be a brave fellow some of these fine days."

But when the plain was reached and, instead of a trot, the Count changed the horse's pace to a gallop, the child was nervous. First he begged his father

to go slower, but instead of that the pace was increased. The strong wind took poor Cuno's breath away and he began to cry softly. Faster and faster they went, and then the boy screamed at the top of his voice.

"Nonsense, nonsense, stop that screaming," began Stormy Weather Zollern; but at that moment his own horse shied, and the reins of the child's steed slipped from his grasp. It took some moments to regain the mastery of his horse, and when he had done this he saw to his consternation that the boy's horse was riderless and was galloping back towards the castle.

Although such a hard surly man, his heart failed him at this sight, for he believed nothing less than that his child lay crushed upon the roadside. He tore his beard and made great lament.

He rode back, but could see no trace of the boy, and was beginning to think that the restive animal had flung him into a ditch, when suddenly he heard a child's voice calling him. He turned quickly, and there, not far from the roadside, an old woman sat beneath a tree and rocked the little one upon her knees.

"How do you come to have the boy, you old witch?" cried Stormy Weather angrily. "Bring him here to me immediately!"

"Not so fast, not so fast, my lord Count," said the old woman, "or you, too, may come to grief on your fine horse. You ask me how I come to hold the child in my arms! Well, his horse threw him and he was hanging, bound by one little foot, his

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"Faster and faster they went"

(p. 184)

hair sweeping the dust, when I caught him in my apron."

"Oh! Rubbish," said the Count ill-humouredly. "Give him to me, for I cannot dismount, the horse is restive and might kick him."

"Give me a florin then?" begged the old woman.

"Rubbish!" cried the Count and threw her a few coppers.

"No, no," said the old woman, "give me a florin."

"A florin indeed, you're not worth one," answered the Count. "Give me the child quickly, or I will set my dog on you."

"Ah! so I'm not worth a florin?" she said with a scornful smile. "Well, we shall see some day if your inheritance will be worth so much as a florin. Here, take your coppers, you can keep them." As she spoke she threw the coppers towards the Count, and so straight was her aim that they fell, one by one, into the leathern purse the Count still held in his hand.

The Count was unable to speak for some minutes, so astounded was he at the old woman's dexterity. Then his surprise changed to anger. He raised his gun and levelled it at her, but she kissed and caressed the little Count, holding him before her, so that the bullet would have struck him first.

"You are a good honest little lad," she said. "Remain so all your life and you will have all you wish for." Then she released him and, shaking her finger threateningly at the Count, cried—"Zollern,

Zollern, you still owe me the florin." Then she turned away heedless of the Count's angry words, and, leaning on her staff, disappeared in the wood.

Conrad, the Count's groom, dismounted, and, taking the little boy in his arms, set him on his saddle and then mounted behind him and rode after his master up the steep hill to the castle.

This was the first and last time that Stormy Weather Zollern took his little son riding, for he considered him effeminate and faint-hearted because he had cried when the horse galloped, and decided that he would never be worth anything. He looked at him with displeasure and whenever the little one came to him and wished to sit upon his knee and be caressed he would push him away and say harshly: "Rubbish—get away!"

The Lady Hedwig had borne her husband's ill-temper without a murmur, but his harsh treatment of his innocent child wounded her deeply. She fretted and fretted, for whenever the boy committed some trifling offence he was punished so severely that she was afraid for him, and at length it preyed upon her mind so much that she fell ill and died. She was mourned by the whole household and by everyone in the neighbourhood, though most deeply by her son.

From this time the Count took no further notice of his son, but left him entirely to the care of his nurse and the old chaplain. Shortly afterwards he married again, a young and rich lady, and as she had twin sons the Count consoled himself with them.

Cuno's favourite walk was to visit the old woman

who had once saved his life. She told him all about his dead mother, and how much good she had done in her life-time. The maids and men-servants warned him repeatedly not to go so often to see her, assuring him that she was nothing more nor less than a witch. But the boy was not afraid, for the chaplain had taught him that there were no such people as witches and that the stories about them riding on broomsticks through the air were all nonsense.

It is true he saw at the old woman's hut all sorts of strange things which he could not understand, and he still remembered the trick with the copper coins which she had played on his father. Then she knew how to mix all sorts of ointments and draughts with which to heal both man and beast; but it was certainly not true, as some folks declared, that she had a weather-glass, and when she hung it over the fire there was a fearful thunderstorm. She taught the young Count a good deal that was useful to him, for instance, all sorts of remedies for sick horses and cattle, how to mix a bait to lure the fishes, and many other useful things. The old woman was almost his sole companion, for his nurse died and his stepmother never troubled about him at all.

By-and-by, as his brothers grew up, his life was even sadder than before, for the twins were so fortunate as to keep their seats at their first ride, and Stormy Weather Zollern thought them clever manly fellows and loved them accordingly, and rode out with them every day and taught them everything he knew himself. But they did not learn much good;

the Count could neither read nor write and he would not allow his sons to waste time over such things.

By the time they were ten years old they were as wild and quarrelsome as their father and led a cat-and-dog life between themselves.

It was only when they wanted to play some unkind trick on Cuno that they were united.

Their mother did not interfere, she thought it manly for them to fight one another. One day an old servant spoke to the Count about the way the two boys fought and quarrelled, and although he only said: "Rubbish!" he bore it in remembrance, and thought out a means to prevent their killing one another as they grew older and fiercer, for the witch's warning still rang in his ears: "We shall see if your inheritance will be worth a florin."

One day when he was out hunting he noticed two hills which seemed to him to have been specially formed as the site of two castles, and made up his mind to build one on each. And so he did, and named the castles one Schalksberg, and the other Hirschberg. Stormy Weather Zollern intended leaving the castle of Hohenzollern to his eldest son and the other two castles to the two younger ones, but his wife never rested until she made him alter his mind.

"Stupid Cuno," this was what she always called the poor boy, "stupid Cuno is rich enough as it is with what he inherited from his mother, and yet you would give him the beautiful castle of Hohenzollern, and my sons are only to have a castle with nothing but woods attached."

The old woman taught the young Count a good deal that was useful to him. (P. 180.)

In vain the Count pointed out to her that Cuno could not be so easily deprived of his birthright; she wept and scolded until even Stormy Weather, who was generally so stubborn, gave in for the sake of peace, and made a will leaving Schalksberg to Schalk, the younger of the twins, and Hohenzollern to Wolf, the elder, whilst Hirschberg, together with the little town of Balingen, were given to Cuno.

Soon afterwards he fell very ill. The doctor warned him of his approaching end and so did the

chaplain, the latter bidding him prepare to face death, but he only growled out:—"Rubbish!" and so died as he had lived, a wild, fierce-tempered man.

Scarcely had he been laid in his grave than the Countess brought the will to Cuno and told him mockingly that, since he was so learned, he might read it and see for himself that he had no longer any interest in Hohenzollern, and she rejoiced with her two sons over the fact that they had deprived Cuno of his inheritance.

Cuno did not attempt to dispute the will, but took leave of the castle with tears in his eyes, for not only had he been born there, but his dear mother lay buried there, and his good old friend the chaplain lived there, whilst his only other friend lived close by. The Castle of Hirschberg was a fine stately castle, but very lonesome and desolate, and he suffered terribly from home-sickness and for longing after his beautiful birthplace.

The Countess and the twin brothers, who were now eighteen years of age, were sitting one evening, gazing down upon the road that led to the castle of Hirschberg, when they saw a stately knight approaching on horseback. He was followed by a litter, borne by two mules and accompanied by many attendants. For a long time they could not think who was coming to visit them, but at length Schalk cried: "It is only our brother from Hirschberg."

"What! Stupid Cuno?" asked the Countess in surprise. "He is evidently going to honour us with an invitation to pay him a visit. The litter he has

no doubt brought for me, to carry me up to the Castle of Hirschberg. Well, I would not have credited him with so much good feeling. One act of politeness deserves another, so we will go down to the castle gates and meet him. Now be sure you look pleasant and receive him kindly; probably when we reach Hirschberg he will make us a present each. He will give you a horse possibly, you a suit of armour, and as for me I have long wanted his mother's jewels."

"I will accept nothing from Stupid Cuno," said Wolf, "and I shall certainly not make him welcome; as far as I am concerned, the sooner he follows my father the better pleased I shall be; we shall then inherit the Castle of Hirschberg, and Schalk and I will sell you the jewels at a cheap rate."

"Indeed, you rascal," scolded his mother, "and so I am to buy the jewels of you, eh? Is that your thanks to me for having procured the Castle of Zollern for you? Schalk, my son, you would give me the jewels without payment, would you not?"

"Death is the only thing to be had without payment," joked her son, laughing, "and if it is true the jewels are worth a king's ransom we should be foolish indeed to hang them round your neck for nothing. As soon as Cuno dies we shall ride over to Hirschberg and divide his property. The jewels we shall sell, and if you give a higher price than anyone else you can have them."

As they talked they had approached the castle gate, and the Countess was forced to suppress her anger, for Cuno was now riding over the drawbridge.

When he became aware of his step-mother and his brothers he reined in his horse, dismounted, and greeted them politely, for although they had done him so much harm he would not allow himself to forget that they were his brothers and she his father's widow.

"We are indeed pleased that you should visit us, my son," said the Countess in honied tones, and with a caressing smile. "And how is everything at Hirschberg? Do you grow more accustomed to the place? I see you have brought a litter. What a splendid one! An empress need not blush to ride in it. I expect it will not be long before there is a Mistress to ride about in it."

"I have not yet thought of marriage, my gracious lady mother," replied Cuno, "and therefore I am here to fetch someone to keep me company at home, and I have brought the litter on that account."

"You are very thoughtful and kind," the lady interrupted him.

"He cannot very well mount a horse now," Cuno continued quietly. "It is Father Joseph, the chaplain, that I have come for. I am going to take him with me, for he was my tutor, and we settled it should be so before I left Hohenzollern. Then I intend taking with me the old woman who lives at the foot of the hill. She is very old now and it was she who saved my life the first time I went out to ride with my father. There are rooms to spare in Hirschberg, and there she shall spend her last days."

So saying, he passed through the courtyard and

entered the castle to fetch the old chaplain. Wolf bit his lips with anger, the Countess was white with rage, but Schalk laughed out loud: "What will you give me for the horse he was to present to me?" he cried. "Brother Wolf, shall I exchange it for your suit of armour? Ha! ha! ha! so he is going to take the old chaplain and the witch to keep him company. What a fine pair to be sure! In the morning he can amuse himself by taking lessons in Greek, and in the afternoon he can study witchcraft. Stupid Cuno is without doubt a comical fellow."

"He is a very low fellow," said the Countess, "and you should be ashamed to laugh at him. It is a disgrace to the family, and we shall be shamed in the eyes of the whole neighbourhood when it becomes known that the Count has taken the old witch to live with him, and carried her off in a magnificent litter drawn by mules. He has inherited his tastes from his mother, she was always mixing herself up with sick folks and common people. What would his father say?"

"His father would just say 'Rubbish,'" said Schalk, laughing.

"Here he comes," said the Countess, "he is not ashamed to give the old man his arm, just as though he were his equal. I will not meet him again."

So the mother and her two sons did not wait to bid Cuno good-bye, but he just led his old friend gently across the bridge and placed him in the litter. When he came to the foot of the hill he stopped in front of the old woman's hut, and found her quite

ready to accompany him. She had a large bundle of little glass pots, and little bottles with medicine in them, and she stood leaning upon her staff waiting for Cuno.

Things did not turn out as the Countess had supposed they would, for instead of laughing at him everyone praised Cuno for his kindness in caring for the last days of the poor old woman, and his pious affection for the old priest, Father Joseph.

The only persons who found fault with him were the Countess and his two brothers, and, as everyone knew how disagreeable and quarrelsome they were, no one paid any heed to the unkind things they said.

They passed Cuno by as though he were a stranger, and this treatment hurt the young man very much, for he thought it wrong that three brothers should be at enmity with one another, and so he hit upon a plan which he thought might help to make them all better friends.

Between the three estates of the three brothers there was a fish-pond, plentifully stocked with fish. This pond belonged to the estate of Hirschberg, and Cuno, knowing how fond his brothers were of fishing, invited them to meet him there for a day's sport.

It was a beautiful spring morning, and the three brothers arrived at the pond almost at the same moment. "Now it is strange," cried Schalk, "that we should all arrive at the pond together. It was just striking seven o'clock as I rode out from Schalksberg."

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"She stood leaning upon her staff waiting for Cuno."

"I left Hohenzollern exactly at seven o'clock, also," said Wolf.

"And I started at seven from Hirschberg," said Cuno.

"Then," said Schalk, "it is quite clear that the pond must be exactly in the centre of the three estates. It is a fine piece of water, too."

"Yes," replied Cuno, "and that is the reason why I have invited you here this morning. I know you are both fond of fishing, and although I also like to cast a line now and again, there is fish enough in the pond for all three of us, and room on the bank, too, even if we all wished to fish here together. And so, my brothers, I propose to make the pond common property and give both of you the same right to fish here as myself."

"Indeed, our brother is mighty condescending," said Schalk, mockingly. "And what shall we be expected to give in return, for, as everyone knows—death is the only thing to be had without payment."

"And yet I give you this without any wish for payment," replied Cuno. "All I want is to meet you here from time to time and have a little speech with you. Are we not all sons of the same father?"

"Well," said Schalk, ungraciously, "I think there is nothing so stupid as to fish in company. One just drives the fish away from the other. But let us take it in turns; you, Cuno, fish Monday and Thursday, Wolf on Tuesday and Friday, and I on Wednesday and Saturday."

"I will not agree to it," said the gloomy Wolf. "I will accept nothing, neither will I share with any one. It was only fair, Cuno, to offer to divide the pond with us, for it really belongs to all three equally; but let us cast the dice and see who shall possess it in the future. If I am more fortunate than you, you can always ask leave of me to fish here."

"I never gamble with dice," replied Cuno, saddened by his brother's ingratitude.

"Our brother is much too pious for that," said Schalk, sneeringly. "But I have another plan which even the most pious hermit could not object to. Let us cast our lines and fish here until the clock strikes twelve, and whoever has caught the most fish by that time shall have the pond for his own."

"Well," said Cuno, "I am a foolish fellow to try for a prize that really belongs to myself, but just to show you I was in earnest in offering to share the pond I will accept the challenge."

Cuno allowed his brothers to choose their own positions and the three began to fish. Then it seemed as though the fish knew who was the rightful owner, for they swarmed to take Cuno's bait. No sooner did the line touch the water than twenty or thirty fish swam up, pushing each other out of the way in their anxiety to be caught. Before two hours had passed the ground all around Cuno was strewn with beautiful fish.

Then he ceased fishing and went to see what luck his brothers had had. Schalk had but three little fish and Wolf five, and both of them were looking very

grim, for they could see from where they stood the enormous quantity Cuno had caught.

As Cuno approached, Wolf broke up his rod in a rage and flung the pieces into the pond—"It is absurd," said he, "to suppose that you, stupid Cuno, can have beaten us fairly. How is it possible for you to catch more fish in a couple of hours than I could catch in a year? It is only by means of witchcraft that you have succeeded."

"You have hit the mark, brother," said Schalk, "the old witch he keeps at Hirschberg has taught him how to enchant the creatures. We were foolish to fish with him. Before long he will turn wizard himself."

"You wicked men," answered Cuno angrily. "I have had an opportunity this morning to judge of your greed, your shamelessness, and your rude, rough manners. Go your ways and never come here again. It would be better for you if you were only half so good and pious as the poor old woman you have called a witch."

"No, a real witch she is not," said Schalk, mockingly, "for if she were she would prophesy more correctly than she has done. Did she not tell my father that a great part of his inheritance would be sold for a florin? Now at his death he owned all the land within sight of Hohenzollern, and it is not likely that it will ever dwindle away so that it will be worth no more than a florin. She is a foolish old woman and you are just stupid Cuno."

Schalk made off as fast as he could when he had

finished speaking, for he was afraid of his brother's strong arm, and Wolf followed him, in a worse temper than his surly father had ever been.

Cuno took his brothers' cruel behaviour so much to heart that he fell ill, and had it not been for the ministrations of Father Joseph and the healing drinks the old woman prepared he must have died.

When his brothers heard that he lay at the point of death they gave a banquet, and when they were flushed with wine they made a compact that whoever first heard of Cuno's death should fire the cannons from his castle to tell his brother the good news. And the one who fired first was to have the best cask of wine in Cuno's cellar.

From this time Wolf kept a servant constantly in the neighbourhood of Hirschberg, and Schalk bribed one of Cuno's servants to let him know the moment his master was dead.

But this servant had more affection for his good, kind master than for the wicked Schalk, and one day he asked the old woman if there were indeed no chance of his master's recovery, and on her telling him that Cuno was very much better he expressed his joy and told her of the plan the brothers had made.

The old woman was very angry, and told Cuno, who, however, would not believe such unnatural conduct, and so the old woman urged him to make a trial and pretend he was dead, and then if the cannons were fired they would, of course, hear them.

So Count Cuno sent for the servant his brother

had bribed, and bade him ride in haste and tell Schalk that he, Cuno, was at the point of death.

As the servant rode out of the gateway, Wolf's spy stopped him and enquired whither he rode in such hot haste.

He told her of the plan the brothers had made. (P. 200.)

"Alas!" said the man, "my poor master is at the point of death. It is said he cannot live through the night."

"Indeed!" cried the man and ran to saddle his horse and in a very short space of time he was riding furiously towards Hohenzollern. Such was his speed that, on reaching the gates, his horse fell and he had only time to say—"Count Cuno is dying," before he became unconscious.

Immediately afterwards the cannons of Hohenzollern thundered forth and Wolf and his mother made merry, and congratulated one another on the

big cask of wine they would win from Cuno's cellar. They reckoned on the inheritance of the fine castle, the fish pond, and the beautiful jewels. And all the time the cannons sounded, each shot being followed by a wonderful echo, or what at first they took to be one, for they speedily discovered it was the sound of shot being fired from Schalksberg.

"Schalk must have had a spy at Hirschberg too," Wolf said to his mother with a laugh. "Well, well, we shall have to share the wine as well as the rest of the inheritance."

With that he mounted his horse, for he guessed that Schalk would try to be before him and pocket some of Cuno's valuables before he arrived. But when he reached the fish-pond the two brothers met, and each blushed with shame, for each knew he had tried to be before his brother, and cheat him of part of the inheritance.

They rode along together and never mentioned Cuno, but discussed how they should settle affairs in the future, and how they should decide which of them should own Hirschberg.

But when they had crossed the drawbridge and entered the courtyard they saw their brother looking out of the window, quite hale and hearty. But his eyes flashed with wrath as he glanced at his two brothers.

They were very much afraid at first, for they thought it must be Cuno's ghost; but as soon as they discovered he was alive and well, Wolf said sheepishly, "Why, I thought you were dead, brother!"

Schalk said very little, but if looks could have killed, Cuno would have had but a short time to live.

Then Cuno cried in a voice of thunder: "From this time I renounce all relationship between us. I heard the firing of cannons from your two castles and understood very well how you were making merry over my death. I have five field-pieces here at Hirschberg and I have had them loaded, and unless you make haste to get beyond range of the bullets you shall judge what sort of marksmen we have here at Hirschberg."

They did not need a second warning, for they saw he meant what he said, and so they set spurs to their horses and raced down the hill. Cuno fired a cannon ball over their heads, not meaning to harm them, but merely to give them a good fright.

On their way down they began to quarrel as to who was to blame, both declaring he had fired his cannon solely because he had heard his brother firing. So bitter were they that when at length they parted company each vowed he hated and detested his brother worse even than Cuno.

Soon afterwards Cuno made his will, but he told no one what was in it. The old woman plagued her favourite sorely to tell her if he had left anything to his brothers, but he would not, and in the end she never knew, for she died the following year. All her pills and potions could not help her then, for she was ninety-eight years old, and the disease she died of was "old age," which the cleverest doctor in the world cannot cure.

Count Cuno laid her to rest with every mark of

respect and sorrow. It was not long before the old chaplain also left him, and then he became a very lonely man. But his loneliness was not for long, for Cuno, the good, died in his twenty-eighth year. Some said he was poisoned by his brothers, but whether it were so or no, no one ever really knew.

Again the country resounded with the roar of cannons, twenty-five rounds being fired from the castles of Zollern and Schalksberg.

"Well, there is no mistake this time," said Schalk, as he met his brother Wolf on the road.

"No, indeed," answered Wolf, "and if he were to rise and glare at us from the window as he did before, I have a pistol with me, ready charged, that will soon teach him to hold his peace."

As they rode up the castle hill a rider and his retinue joined them. Neither of the brothers knew him, but supposed he must be a friend of Cuno's who had come to his funeral, so they began to praise the dead man, lamented his early death, and Schalk even shed a few crocodile tears. But the knight answered never a word, only rode silently up the hill-side.

When the brothers dismounted, Wolf called for wine—"and of the best, Master Cellarman," he added —"for now we are going to enjoy ourselves."

He went up the stairs and entered the great hall, followed closely by the silent knight, who, when the twins had seated themselves at the table, drew a silver coin from his vest pocket, and, flinging it on the table between them, cried: "There is your inheritance,

you will find it correct, the exact amount being a florin."

The brothers looked surprised, laughed uneasily, and asked him what he meant.

The knight drew forth a parchment, with numerous seals attached, and began to read out what Cuno had set down there. Every act of enmity they had shown him during his lifetime was chronicled there, and then came an order that his estates and all that he possessed, with the exception of his mother's jewels, were to be sold to the State of Würtemberg for the sum of one florin. The jewels, however, were to be sold, and the money be used to endow a house for the poor in the little town of Balingen.

The brothers laughed no longer; but gnashed their teeth with rage, for they knew they could not wrest their inheritance from Würtemberg; they had lost for ever the beautiful castle and all the estates belonging to it, all they were to inherit was a paltry florin.

Wolf slipped it into his pocket and he and Schalk stalked from the castle without so much as a word to the Commissioner of Würtemberg. They rode home, each to his own castle, but on the following morning Wolf rode over to Schalksberg and suggested they should go to the little town of Balingen which had gone to Würtemberg with the rest of the estates, and, just to show the folks they did not care, spend their inheritance on a quart of wine in which to drink each other's healths. So they rode together to the inn at Balingen, called for a quart of red wine, and drank to each other.

When it was finished they called for the landlord, and Wolf flung the florin upon the table, but the landlord shook his head and told them that early that morning a messenger had come from Würtemberg and had paraded the town, with beat of drum, and proclaimed that the State had ordered all florin pieces to be called in and the use of them discontinued—"and therefore," said the landlord, "I must ask you to pay me in a different coin."

The brothers looked at each other and turned pale. Neither of them had any other money with him and so they were obliged to owe the landlord for the quart of wine.

They went on their way silently, for they did not feel in the mood for conversation, but when they came to the cross roads, where the way to the right led to Hohenzollern and that to the left to Schalksberg, Schalk said: "Well, our inheritance, it seems, was not worth a florin, moreover, the wine we thought to purchase with it was bad!"

"Yes," replied Wolf thoughtfully, "and the old woman's prediction has come true, for did she not say 'We shall see some day if your inheritance be worth so much as a florin'? We have not been able to pay for a quart of wine with ours."

Then they parted company and rode back to their castles, angry with themselves and the whole world.

THE COLD HEART.

The Little Glass-man.

IF ever you should travel through the country of Suabia you should take a peep at the Black Forest, not only that you may admire the magnificent pinetrees, but that you may study the people living there, for they are quite unlike any of their neighbours. The inhabitants of the Black Forest near the town of Baden are tall and broad and it would almost seem as though the invigorating scent of the pine-trees had strengthened their bodies and their characters too, for they are fearless, frank and honest. Their principal industries are glass-making and clock-making. The costume they wear, too, is different from the ordinary run of peasants, and gives them a strange and somewhat dignified appearance.

On the other side of the Forest, although of the same race, the inhabitants are, on account of

the different occupations they pursue, somewhat different in their manners and customs. These people work chiefly in the Forest as wood-cutters and timber-merchants. They fell their pine-trees and then float them down the Nagold to the Neckar, down the Neckar to the Rhine, even travelling as far as Holland, the rafts of the Black Forest being known upon the sea-coast. They stop their rafts at every town they come to, so that folks may buy their timber if they have a mind to; but the broadest and tallest beams and masts are sold to the Dutch ship-builders for a good round sum of money. These men, accustomed to a rough, wandering life, are as different in character from the people living in the other part of the Forest as their costumes differ.

The men living in the neighbourhood of Baden wear black jackets, closely pleated trousers, red stockings, and peaked hats; the woodmen, however, wear jackets of dark coloured linen, broad green braces, black leather breeches, from one of the pockets of which a brass foot rule protrudes, but their chief pride is in their boots, which reach nearly to their middle, so that the raftsmen can wade through fairly deep water without wetting their feet.

At one time it was believed that two spirits inhabited the Black Forest; the one, known as "The Little Glass-man," was a good little spirit, and but three feet and a half in height, and was always to be seen dressed in the same costume as the glass-makers or clock-makers wore; but Dutch

Michael, who haunted the further side of the Forest, was a broad-shouldered giant and was dressed like a raftsman. Some of the wood-cutters who had seen him declared his boots were so big that an ordinary full-grown man could have stood upright in one of them and yet not have reached to the top of it.

A young Black Forester, named Peter Munk, is said to have had a very extraordinary adventure with these two wood-spirits. Peter lived with his mother, who was a widow, in the very heart of the Forest. His father had been a charcoal burner and after his death the mother trained her son to the same employment.

At first Peter was content to follow his father's occupation and to sit by his sooty kiln, as black as soot himself, and now and again to drive into the towns and villages to sell his charcoal. But he had plenty of time for reflection and it gradually began to occur to him that his lot was not a very happy one. He thought how smart the glass-makers and clock-makers looked, decked out in their best clothes on Sunday. "But," said he to himself, "if I were to put on my father's jacket with its silver buttons, and encase my legs in bright red stockings and swagger down the street, folks would say, 'Tis only Peter Munk, the charcoal burner, after all.'"

The wood-cutters, raftsmen and timber-merchants were also objects of his envy. Whenever these forest giants came into the village in their splendid

costumes, decked out with silver buttons and buckles and chains, and stood with their great legs wide apart, watching the dance perhaps, using strange Dutch oaths, and smoking long pipes from Cologne, he would say to himself—"Ah! what happiness to be a man like that!" Sometimes one of these fortunate beings would lunge a hand into his pocket and bring out a handful of florins and commence to gamble with them; six batzen at a time they would risk at dice, and Peter had seen one of the richest timber-merchants lose in a night more money than he or his father had ever earned in a year, and yet not seem greatly upset over the loss of the money.

At these times Peter would feel half beside himself and would steal away to his lonely hut consumed with rage and jealousy.

There were three men in particular who excited his admiration and envy. One was a tall stout man, with a very red face, who was said to be the richest man in the country. He was called "Fat Ezekiel."

Twice a year he journeyed to Amsterdam and was always lucky in getting a better price for his timber than anyone else, so that he could travel back in state, whilst his neighbours had to get back as best they could.

The second man was the tallest and thinnest man in the whole Forest and was nick-named the Long-legged Lounger, and Peter Munk envied him his extraordinary impudence, for he would flatly contradict

the most important personages, and no matter how crowded the inn might be he would take up four times as much room as the fattest men; he would plant his elbows on the table, or stretch his long legs upon a bench, and no one ventured to expostulate, because he was so immensely rich.

The third man, however, was young and handsome, and was the best dancer in the district, so that he was known far and wide as the King of the Dancers. He had at one time been very poor and acted as servant to one of the timber merchants, but suddenly he had become enormously rich. Some said he had found a pot of gold, others affirmed he had fished up a parcel of gold pieces from the bottom of the river, which had been part of the lost Nibelungen treasure; but, no matter how he had attained it, the fact remained that he had suddenly become very rich indeed and was looked upon as little short of a prince by his less lucky friends and companions.

Peter Munk's mind was often occupied by the good fortune of these three men, as he sat alone in the forest or by his fire!

It is true that all three of them were hated by their neighbours on account of their unnatural avarice and their want of feeling for those who owed them money, or for the poor, but though they were hated they were treated with respect on account of their money, for they could afford to scatter it about as the pine-trees scattered their needles.

"Alas!" sighed Peter one day, "I can stand my

poverty no longer; would that I were as rich and respected as Fat Ezekiel, or as impudent and powerful as the Long-legged Lounger, or as fine a dancer as the Dance King and be able to throw florins to the fiddlers instead of pence. Where *do* these fellows get their money from?"

In thinking of ways and means by which he might amass money, he at length remembered the stories the people used to tell of the little Glass-man and Dutch Michael. In his father's lifetime they had frequently been visited by folks as poor as themselves, and the conversation would turn to rich folks and how they had acquired their money, and the little Glass-man had not infrequently played a prominent part in the conversation. He even thought he could remember the little verse it was necessary to recite in the Forest if one wished to summon the little man; it began:

> Owner of all in the pine woods green,
> Many a hundred years thou hast seen,
> Thine all the land where the pine-trees grow—

But there he stopped short, and strive as he would he could not remember the rest of the verse.

He thought about asking some of the old men who had been his father's friends, but a certain shyness prevented his mentioning the little Glass-man and so betraying perhaps what was in his mind. There were very few rich people in the Forest and he wondered why some of them had not tried their luck with the wood-spirits. At last he persuaded his mother to talk about the little man; but she could

tell him little more than he knew already. Moreover, she could only remember the first line of the verse; but finally she said the spirit only showed himself to folks born on a Sunday between the hours of eleven and two.

Peter Munk sat alone in the forest. (P. 211.)

"Had you but known the charm," said she, "you might have summoned the Little Man yourself, for you were born at mid-day on a Sunday."

On hearing this Peter Munk was nearly beside himself with impatience to set out upon this adventure. Surely the portion of the verse he knew would prove sufficient to summon the little Glass-man to a Sunday's child like himself.

So one day when he had managed to sell all his charcoal, instead of kindling a new fire he dressed himself in his father's best jacket and red stockings, put the pointed hat upon his head and, taking his five foot blackthorn staff in his hand, bade good-bye to his mother. "It will soon be time to draw lots and decide who is to go for a soldier, and I am

going to the magistrate to remind him that as you are a widow and I your only son I am exempt from serving in the army," said he.

His mother praised him for his thoughtfulness and he set out towards a particular clump of black pines.

This spot was the highest point in the Black Forest and there was not a village nor a hut for some miles around it, for the superstitious people thought it was haunted. Although the trees there grew thick and tall they were never felled, for it was said that when anyone had attempted to do so terrible accidents occurred. Sometimes the axe had sprung from the haft and buried itself in the man's foot, or a stubborn tree trunk that seemed to defy the stroke of the axe fell suddenly and crushed the wood-cutter, injuring him severely and even killing him. Even the finest tree could but be used for fuel, for the raftsmen would not take a single log from this particular clump, for it was said that it would bring them bad luck and that raft and raftsmen would sink.

And so it chanced that the trees grew thicker and taller, excluding every ray of sunshine, so that even in the daytime it was dark as night there, and Peter Munk's courage began to fail him as he reached the spot, for there was not a sound to be heard, no voice, no footstep except his own, the stroke of no axe resounded, and even the birds seemed to have deserted the place.

Peter reached the highest point of the mountain and stood before a pine-tree of tremendous girth, for

THE COLD HEART

"This" thought he, "must surely be the abode of the Glass man"

(p. 27)

which a Dutch ship-builder would have given many a hundred florins. "This," thought he, "must surely be the abode of the Glass-man," and so he drew his hat from his head, bowed low, and said with a trembling voice:—

"Good-evening, Master Glass-man," but there was not a sound in reply. "Perhaps I had better try the little verse," he thought, and began in flattering tones:

> "Owner of all in the pine woods green,
> Many a hundred years thou hast seen,
> Thine all the lands where the pine-trees grow—"

As he spoke he saw to his terror a strange little figure peeping out from behind the big tree trunk. It seemed to be dressed exactly as he had heard in the black vest, red stockings, and pointed hat. Even the pale, clever little face he seemed to see for a moment; but it disappeared as quickly as it had come.

"Master Glass-man," cried Peter in trembling tones, "I pray you do not make sport of me. If you think I did not see you you are mistaken." But there was no reply, beyond a faint chuckle from behind the tree.

At length his impatience overcame his fear—"Wait awhile, my fine fellow," he cried angrily, "I will soon catch you." He made a bound towards the tree and darted round to the other side. But there was no Glass-man there, only a dainty little squirrel that scampered up the trunk of the tree.

Peter Munk shook his head. He perceived clearly

that his failure was on account of his not knowing the concluding line of the verse, but ponder as he might he could not call it to memory. The squirrel showed itself upon the lower branches of the pine-tree and appeared to mock and make sport of him. It dressed its fur, waved its bushy tail, gazed at him with its bright clever eyes, but at length he was half afraid of it, for one moment it seemed to have a man's head and to wear a pointed hat, the next moment it was like any ordinary squirrel, then suddenly its hind legs became clothed with red stockings and black shoes. In short it was quite the strangest little creature Peter Munk had ever seen and he was afraid of it, and so he turned and left the spot quicker than he had gone there.

It seemed to him that the woods grew darker and thicker as he ran, until he became possessed of an absolute terror, and it was not until he heard the barking of dogs in the distance that he slackened his pace, then, as a peasant's hut burst on his astonished gaze, he found that in his fright he had been running in the opposite direction to that which he had intended, and instead of arriving at the dwellings of the glass-makers he had come out amongst the wood-cutters and raftsmen.

The people who lived in this particular cottage were wood-cutters, and the family consisted of an old man, his son, the master of the house, and his family.

Peter Munk approached them and asked if they could give him a night's lodging, and they received him kindly and hospitably, never so much as asking

for his name or where he came from. They gave him cider to drink and in the evening they roasted a large woodcock for his supper, one of the daintiest morsels to be had in the Black Forest.

When they had made a good meal the housewife and her daughters seated themselves round a big blaze of light, which the youths kindled from the resinous pine-wood, and commenced plying their distaffs, the old grandfather, the guest, and the master sat smoking and watching the women at their work, but the young men of the family busied themselves fashioning wooden spoons and forks.

Out in the woods a storm raged and howled amongst the pine-trees. Now and again there was the sound of a falling tree or the cracking of branches as they were torn from the parent stem. The fearless youths would have run out into the wood in order to watch the fearful but grand spectacle, but their grandfather forbade them.

"No one wandering in the wood to-night would ever return," said he. "Without doubt Dutch Michael is abroad and seeks a new raft-load in the forest."

The boys had heard many a time of Dutch Michael; but nevertheless they begged their grandfather to tell them a story about him. Peter Munk, too, who had only heard vague reports about him in his own part of the country, joined his requests to that of the boys and asked him to tell him who he really was and where he lived.

"Why, to think you don't know that now," said the old man. "You must have come from the other

side of the forest then, if not further away. I will tell you all I know of Dutch Michael.

"Some hundreds of years ago, so the story goes, there were no more honest and respectable folks to be found far and wide than the Black Foresters. It is only since so much money came into the country that folks have become dishonest and wicked. Nowadays on a Sunday young men dance and smoke, and swear, enough to make one's hair stand on end, but in those days it was different, and even though he stands at the window and hears me say it, I maintain that Dutch Michael is at the root of all the evil.

"More than a hundred years ago there lived a rich timber merchant, who had many work-people and whose business was carried on from here to far down the Rhine. He was a good pious man and a blessing rested on all his ventures.

"One evening there came to his door a man the like of whom he had never seen before. He wore the dress of a Black Forester, but he was a great deal taller than the tallest man and one could scarcely believe it possible for there to be such a giant.

"He asked for work and the merchant, seeing that he looked so strong and likely to be able to carry heavy burdens, asked what wages he required and soon came to terms with him.

"Michael was the man's name, and such a workman his master had never had before. When it came to hewing trees, he was worth three other men, and when the timber had to be carried away, though there were six men at the end of a trunk he would take

the other end by himself and make no labour of it at all.

"At the end of half a year he came to his master and said he was tired of felling timber and would like to go with the rafts and see the places the timber went to.

"'Well,' said his master, 'I will not stand in your way. It is true that you are more useful to me as a wood-cutter, for strong men are needed for such hard work, whereas one has need of skill and dexterity rather than strength upon a raft. However, this once you shall go.'

"And so it came to pass, and he was to set out with a raft consisting of eight portions, all being connected. But on the evening before they were to start Michael brought down to the river's edge eight more huge trees, the biggest and longest that had ever been seen, and each one he carried upon his shoulder as easily as though it had been his raft-pole. To this day no one knows where they had been felled.

"The timber merchant's heart rejoiced, for he reckoned this timber would fetch a vast sum; but Michael only said—'They are for a raft for myself. I could not very well manage on the other little rafts.'

"His master offered him a pair of raftsmen's boots, in return for the service he had done him, but Michael thrust them aside and produced a pair such as never were seen before. My grandfather assured me they must have weighed a hundred pounds at least and were five or six feet high.

"The raft set out and, just as he had astonished

the wood-cutters, now he made the raftsmen open their eyes.

"They had believed, when they saw the huge additional portion Michael had attached to the raft, that it would travel much slower on that account. But not so, as soon as it reached the Neckar it darted ahead like an arrow. When they came to a sharp bend in the river, whereas the raftsmen would formerly have had some trouble to keep the raft in the middle of the stream, and not to run it aground, now, Michael just sprang into the water and with one mighty push turned the raft either to left or right until the danger was past.

"When they came to a straight stretch he would run along the different portions of the raft until he came to the front one, and then, bidding all the men put by their poles he would stick his own enormous pole into the gravelly river-bed and send the raft rushing forward at such a pace that trees, country, villages, all seemed flying past. And so it came about that they reached Cologne in less than half the time it usually took. Here the raftsmen had been wont to sell all their timber; but Michael now dissuaded them from doing this.

"'You are fine merchants,' said he, 'you don't know how to protect your own interests. Do you suppose the people of Cologne need all the wood they purchase from the Black Forest for themselves? Not they! They give you about half what it is really worth and sell it again at a dearer rate in Holland. Let us sell the smaller timber here and take the larger

Michael made the raftsmen open their eyes. (P. 222.)

trees to Holland, and whatever we make over and above the usual price will be our profit.

"So spoke the crafty Michael, and his companions

were only too ready to follow his advice, some because they wanted to go to Holland to see the country and some because they liked the idea of the extra money. Only one man amongst them remained honest, and he begged the rest not to endanger his master's property risking the troublesome journey to Holland, or at least if they went there not to cheat the merchant out of the better price that they sold the wood for. But they would not listen to him and soon forgot his words, that is to say, with the exception of Michael. So they floated down the Rhine, Michael steering the raft, and very soon they reached Rotterdam.

"Here they obtained four times the usual price for the wood, the huge trunks Michael had added fetching in particular a very high price. The Black Foresters were delighted at the sight of so much gold. Michael divided it, one portion for the master and three portions to be divided between the raftsmen.

"The men at once began to waste their money in the inns, drinking and gambling with sailors and all sorts of rabble and dishonest folks. The one honest man amongst them Dutch Michael sold to a press-gang man and he was carried off and never heard of again. From that time Holland became the Black Foresters' Paradise and Dutch Michael was their king. It was some time before the timber merchants discovered the truth of the matter, and so it gradually came about that riches, oaths, bad habits, drinking and gambling were introduced from Holland into the Black Forest.

"When the whole story did come out, however,

Dutch Michael was nowhere to be found. But he is not dead, and for over a hundred years he has haunted our forest, and it is said he has helped many a one to become rich, but at the cost of his poor soul. I will say no more about that, still it is very certain that on stormy nights such as the present, he seeks out the finest trees from the portion of the forest where it is forbidden to fell timber; my own father saw him break one that was full four feet thick as though it had been a reed. This timber he gives to those who have left the straight path of honesty and gone to him for help. At midnight he helps them to carry the wood to the river, and steers the rafts down the streams for them until they reach Holland.

"But if I were King in Holland, I would have them sunk with shot to the bottom of the stream, for every ship that carries but a single board or bream sold by Dutch Michael is bound to sink. That is why one hears of so many shipwrecks. How else could it be that a fine ship, as large as a church should go to the bottom of the sea? Every time Dutch Michael fells a tree in the forest, a plank in some ship bursts, the water penetrates and the good ship is lost with all hands.

"That is the story of Dutch Michael, and it is quite true that it was he who introduced everything that is bad in the Black Forest. He can make one as rich as a dream," he added mysteriously, "but I would rather be without his wealth, and not for the whole world would I stand in the shoes of Fat Ezekiel or the Long-legged Lounger, and it is said that the Dance King had given up his soul to him also."

The storm had blown over during the old man's recital and now the maidens timidly lit their lamps and crept away to bed, and the men placed a sack of leaves for a pillow for Peter Munk upon the bench in the chimney corner, and wishing him good-night, left him to himself.

Charcoal Peter, as he was usually called, had terrible dreams that night. He thought that the grim gigantic form of Dutch Michael came to the window and, forcing it open, stretched a long arm through the space and shook a purse of gold pieces at Peter. The money clinked musically in his ears. The next moment however, who should appear but the little Glass-man. He rode here and there in the air upon a huge green glass bottle and Peter thought he could hear the low chuckling he had heard in the clump of black pines; then suddenly he caught the sound of a hoarse voice booming in his left ear these words:

> "In Holland there's gold to be had
> For the asking, so wherefore be sad?
> Dutch Michael has gold, glitt'ring gold,
> Come to him, then, for riches untold."

Then in his right ear he heard the three lines of the little Glass-man's verse recited and a soft voice whispered, "Foolish Charcoal Peter, foolish Peter Munk, can't you think of a word to rhyme with 'grow' and you born at mid-day on a Sunday, too? For shame, Peter, come try for a rhyme, try for a rhyme." Peter groaned and sighed in his sleep and tried his hardest to make a rhyme, but as he had

never made a single one when awake he did not succeed any better in his dreams.

He awoke as the first streaks of dawn appeared and sat up, placed his elbows on the table and rested his head upon his hands. As he remembered the whispering in his ears he said to himself: "Rhyme foolish Charcoal Peter, for goodness sake make a rhyme." He tapped his forehead with his fingers, but no rhyme would come, and as he sat there sad and disturbed in his mind, trying hard to find a rhyme to "grow," the young fellows passed the cottage and one of them was singing at the top of his voice:

Peter tapped his forehead with his fingers. (P. 227.)

"I stood beside a little hut,
Just where the pine-trees grow,
Peeped in for my beloved,
But her face she would not show."

The words rushed through Peter's ears like lightning; but like lightning they were gone again. He jumped

up, ran from the cottage, pursued the three men, and seized the singer roughly by the arm. "Stop, friend," he cried, "what did you rhyme with 'grow'? Be good enough, please, to tell me what you were singing."

"What's that to you, fellow?" replied the Black Forester. "I can sing what I like, I suppose? Let go my arm, or——"

"No, no," screamed Peter, clinging all the tighter to him, "I will not let you go until you have told me what you were singing." But the singer's two companions fell upon Peter and gave him such a drubbing he was forced to let go the singer's clothing, and fell fainting to his knees.

"Now you have your deserts," they said, laughing, "and perhaps you will know better another time than to molest honest folk on an open road."

"I will certainly remember not to do so any more," replied Charcoal Peter with a sigh, "but now that you have given me a good beating be so good as to tell me slowly and clearly the words of the song."

They laughed at him and mocked him, but the singer repeated the words to him and then, laughing and singing, the three young men went on their way.

Peter raised himself painfully to his feet. "Ah," he said, "so 'show' rhymes with 'grow.' Very well, Master Glass-man, we will have a word to say to each other by-and-by." He went back to the cottage, took leave of his host, and with his staff in his hand set out once more for the clump of black pine-trees.

He walked slowly, for he had to compose a last line to the verse, and although he now had a word

to rhyme he found it a difficult matter to make up the whole line. But by the time he was close to the place and the pines began to grow taller and thicker, he had his line quite complete, and so overjoyed was he that he made a bound forward and nearly bounded up against a huge giant of a man, dressed as a raftsman, and carrying a pole in his hand the size of a ship's mast, who stepped suddenly from out of the clump of pine-trees.

Peter Munk's knees shook with fright as he saw the giant taking slow steps alongside of him, in order to accommodate himself to Peter's pace. "Without doubt it is Dutch Michael," thought he, but the huge figure paced silently on.

Peter glanced sideways at him from time to time. He was certainly taller than the tallest man he had ever seen, his face was neither young nor old, but was covered with lines and creases innumerable. He wore a linen vest and the enormous boots which were drawn up over his leather breeches Peter recognised at once from the old man's story.

"Peter Munk, what are you doing in this clump of black pines?" he asked at length in deep threatening tones.

"Good morning, sir," answered Peter, trying to appear unconcerned, although he was trembling violently. "I am only on my way home."

"Peter Munk," replied the Forest King, glaring at the unfortunate young man, "your way does not lie through this clump of trees."

"Well, not exactly," said Peter, "but it is so

hot to-day that I thought it would be cooler here beneath the pine-trees."

"Don't lie to me, Charcoal Peter," thundered the giant, "or I will strike you to the earth with my pole. Do you suppose I did not see you begging from the little Glass-man?" Then in milder tones Dutch Michael went on. "It was a foolish thing to do, Peter, and it was lucky for you you could not remember the lines of the verse, for the little fellow is a terrible miser, and only gives grudgingly; moreover, whoever accepts money from him is never happy again his whole life long. You are a simpleton, Peter, and I am sorry for you from the bottom of my heart. To think that a fine handsome fellow like you should be nothing better than a charcoal burner! When other folks jingle fat ducats in their pockets you have only a few copper coins to show. It is a wretched life to lead."

Peter nearly bounded up against a huge giant. (P. 229.)

"You are right there, it is a wretched life," said Peter.

"Well, well," proceeded Dutch Michael, "I have helped many a poor fellow in distress and you would not be the first. Just say how many hundred florins you would like to have to begin with?"

As he spoke he jingled the money in his enormous pockets and it sounded just as it had done in Peter's dream.

Peter's heart beat fast with fear and he was hot and cold by turns, for Dutch Michael had not the appearance of one who gave money out of charity alone. He remembered the mysterious words of the old man regarding the men who had enriched themselves at the Forest King's expense, and overcome with terror he cried out: "Many thanks, sir, for your kind offer, but I would rather have nothing to do with you," and with that he took to his heels and ran for his life.

But the terrible Michael was not to be shaken off. By taking huge strides he kept pace with Peter — "You will regret this," he said, "mark my words you will regret it. Do not run so fast, yonder is the boundary of my domains and I can go no further."

On hearing these words Peter hastened on more than ever and as he reached the boundary he made a spring for safety. Dutch Michael hurled his huge pole after him. It missed him, but the force with which it had been thrown caused it to break into splinters. One splinter fell at his feet and Peter stopped to pick it up to throw it back at Michael; but before he could do so he felt the wood turn and twist in

his hand, and to his horror he saw that it had turned into a huge snake, which was about to spring at him. He tried to shake it off, but it had fastened itself round his arm and darted its horrible head towards his face, when suddenly a woodcock flew down and seized the snake's head in its beak and flew off with it. Dutch Michael raged and bellowed in vain, and Peter, trembling in every limb, once more set out upon his way. The path grew steeper and steeper until at length he found himself before the big pine-tree in the centre of the clump of black pines. As on the previous day, he bowed to the invisible Glass-man and began reciting the verse:

"Owner of all in the pine-woods green,
Many a hundred years thou hast seen,
Thine all the lands where the pine trees grow—
To the Sunday-born thy face now show!"

"Well, it's not quite right yet, but as it is you Charcoal Peter, I will let it pass," said a fine soft voice near him.

Peter turned in surprise and saw, seated beneath a beautiful pine-tree, a little old man. He was wearing a black vest, red stockings, and a large pointed hat He had a refined, delicate little face and a long white beard as soft as a cobweb; but the most extraordinary thing about him that Peter at first sight noticed was that he was smoking a long pipe of blue glass; but on approaching nearer Peter discovered that everything the little man wore, coat, shoes, stockings, all were made of coloured glass; but it was as flexible as though it were still hot, and went into folds, as cloth

THE COLD HEART.

Charcoal Peter and the Glass-man.

would have done, with every movement of the little man's body.

"And so you met that rascal Dutch Michael" said the little man. "He would have done you an injury had I not taken his magic wand from him. Moreover, he will not easily get it again."

"Yes, Master Glass-man," replied Peter, bowing low. "I had a terrible fright. And so you were the woodcock that pecked the snake to death? Very many thanks. But I have come to you for advice. Things are not very flourishing with me. A charcoal-burner does not get on in the world, and, as I am young and strong, I should like to be in a better position, especially when I see others like Fat Ezekiel and the Dance King with as much money as they can spend."

"Peter," said the little man sternly, as he blew a cloud of smoke from his pipe, "Peter, don't let me hear you speak of these men. Just for a few years' happiness, or perhaps only the appearance of happiness they will pay by an eternity of misery. You should not be-little your trade. Your father and and grandfather before you pursued it. I trust it is not the love of idleness that has led you to me."

Peter was alarmed by the little man's earnestness and blushed. "No, no," he faltered, "I know full well that idleness is the root of all trouble; but you cannot wonder that I should wish to better myself. A charcoal-burner is thought so little of, the glass-makers, clock-makers and raftsmen are all of higher standing."

"Pride goes before a fall," said the little man in more friendly tones. "You men are a strange race! It is seldom that any one of you is content with his position. If you were a glass-worker you would no doubt wish to be a timber merchant, and if you were a timber merchant you would want to be the Keeper of the Forest, or even a magistrate. I am accustomed to grant three wishes to every Sunday-child that knows how to find his way to me. The first two are free to be granted; but I can refuse to grant the third if I think it is a foolish one. So wish something for yourself, Peter, but take care that it is something good and useful."

"Hurrah! you are without doubt a first-rate little fellow, Master Glass-man. And so as I may wish what I will, I wish that I may dance as well as the Dance King, and when I am with Fat Ezekiel I may always have as much money in my pockets as he has."

"Fool!" cried the little man angrily, "what an idiotic wish to make, to be able to dance and to have a supply of money with which to gamble. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Peter, to cheat yourself of your good fortune in such a manner. Of what use will it be to your poor mother that you can dance well? And of what use your money if you only spend it in the ale house? When you are with Fat Ezekiel and the Dance King your pockets will be as full as theirs, but you will leave your money behind you, and be as poor and hungry the rest of the week as you were before. I will grant you one other wish, but see that you make better use of it."

Peter scratched his head and spoke after some deliberation. "Very well, I wish for the finest glass factory in the Black Forest and sufficient money to carry on my business."

"Nothing else?" asked the little man earnestly. "Nothing else, Peter?"

"Well," said Peter, "whilst I am about it you might as well add a horse and a little carriage."

"Oh! you stupid, you stupid! cried the little man, and in his wrath he flung his glass pipe at the nearest pine-tree and smashed it into a hundred pieces. "A horse and carriage indeed! Why couldn't you wish for knowledge and common sense. But there, there, no need to look so sad, the second wish was not altogether so foolish as the first. A glass factory is not a bad thing to possess and will certainly provide its owner with a living, but had you wished for knowledge and common sense with it, the horse and carriage would have followed as a natural consequence."

"But, Master Glass-man," replied Peter, "I have still one wish left and I will wish for knowledge and common sense if you think it so necessary for me to possess it."

"No, no, mark my words you will find yourself in such a dilemma one of these fine days that you will be thankful to have a remaining wish to help you out, and now go home. Here are two thousand golden crowns, see that you use them to the best advantage, and don't come here asking for more money or I will hang you from the top of the tallest tree. Three days ago old Winkfritz died. He owned the

largest glass factory in the forest. Go first thing to-morrow morning and make a bid for the business. See that you are industrious and behave yourself well, and I will visit you from time to time and give you good advice to make up for your not having wished for common sense, but I must tell you seriously that your first wish was an evil wish. Be careful how you take to frequenting ale-houses, for never yet did they do anyone anything but harm."

Whilst speaking the little man had taken out another pipe made of the very finest glass, filled it with dried fir cones, and stuck it in his little toothless mouth. He now drew forth an enormous burning glass and, stepping out into the sunlight, lighted his pipe by means of the glass.

When he had succeeded he offered his hand to Peter in friendly fashion, gave him a little more good advice, smoked faster and faster, and at length disappeared in a cloud of smoke, which circled higher and higher until it reached the tree tops, leaving a scent of genuine Dutch tobacco behind it.

When Peter reached home he found his mother in great trouble about him, for the good woman quite supposed he had been made to enlist for a soldier.

He told her he had met a good friend in the Forest who had given him enough money to start a different business. Although his mother had lived for thirty years in the charcoal-burner's hut and had become as accustomed to the sooty faces of her men-folk as a miller's wife to her husband's floury face, she had still sufficient vanity at once to despise

their former position as soon as she saw a chance of bettering it.

"As the mother of a man who owns a glass factory," said she, "I shall be a degree above my

The little man disappeared in a cloud of smoke. (P. 236.)

neighbours, and in future I shall take a foremost seat in church amongst the well-to-do people."

Peter soon made a bargain with Winkfritz's heirs for possession of the glass factory. He retained all the workmen employed there and worked hard, making

glass night and day. At first he liked his new trade. He walked about the factory with his hands stuck in his pockets, looking at this and that and making his workmen laugh at his queer questions. His greatest pleasure was to watch the glass-blowing; he liked to take the soft material and fashion it into all sorts of queer figures. But he soon tired of the work and by degrees he came less often to the factory; first it fell to passing only an hour a day there, then he would come in every other day, finally only once a week, and all this came of frequenting the ale-house. The Sunday after he had met the little Glass-man, he went to the inn and there he found the Dance King, already dancing, and Fat Ezekiel, with a can of beer beside him, playing pitch and toss for crown pieces. He put his hand in his pocket to be sure the little Glass-man kept good faith, and found his pockets bulging with gold and silver. In his limbs he felt a strange and unaccustomed twitching, as though he wanted to dance, and as soon as the first dance was over he took his partner out and placed himself close to the Dance King. For every skip the Dance King made Peter made two. If the Dance King bounded a foot into the air Peter bounded twice as high, and no matter what complicated steps the Dance King made, Peter's dancing was twice as complicated. He bounded, he pranced, he twisted until all who beheld him were in a whirl of wonder.

As soon as it became known that Peter had purchased a glass factory, and when folks saw the careless way in which he flung a handful of coppers at a time

to the musicians, their astonishment knew no bounds. Some said he must have found buried treasure in the forest, others said he had inherited a big sum of money, and everyone paid him great respect and attention because it was apparent he was a monied man. The same evening he lost twenty crowns, but in spite of that his money still chinked in his pockets as though he had plenty left.

When Peter saw how much he was looked up to he scarcely knew how to contain himself for pride and joy. He threw his money about with a free hand and gave a goodly portion to the poor, remembering the times when he had suffered for want of money.

The Dance King's art having been quite supplanted by that of Peter, the latter was nicknamed "Dance Emperor," but this nickname soon gave place to another and a worse one. On Sundays in the inn there was no worse gambler than he, for no one could afford to lose as much as he could, but as he always played with Fat Ezekiel, who won his money easily, he had still, just as the little Glass-man had promised, as much money in his pockets as his opponent.

If he lost twenty or thirty crowns one minute, no sooner had Fat Ezekiel slipped them into his pocket than the same sum appeared in Peter's. He took to gambling every day in the week, and what with drinking and playing he soon became one of the worst characters in the Black Forest, and so he came to be called "Gambling Peter" instead of "Dance Emperor."

It was on account of this that his glass factory soon began to show signs of decay. He ordered glass to be made as before; but as he had no business capacity he did not know how to dispose of it to the best advantage, and soon had such an accumulation of glass goods that he was obliged to sell to pedlars or anyone who would buy it at half price, so that he might have the money to pay his workmen.

One evening as he was going home from the inn he could not help thinking of the terrible muddle he had made of his affairs and worrying himself over the loss of his fortune, when suddenly he became aware that someone was walking beside him, and behold it was the little Glass-man.

Peter flew into a terrible rage and accused the little man of being the cause of all his misfortunes. "Of what use to me is a horse and a carriage?" he cried. "Of what use my factory and all my glass? I was happier as a poverty-stricken charcoal-burner than I am now, for I never know when the bailiffs may come and seize my goods to pay my debts."

"Oh!" replied the little Glass-man, "so it is my fault, is it, that you are unhappy? Is this the thanks you offer me for my generosity? Why did you wish so foolishly? You wished to be a glass manufacturer and yet knew nothing about the business. Did I not warn you to be careful what you wished for? It was knowledge and common sense you wanted."

"Knowledge and common sense," screamed Peter. "I will show you that I have as much common sense as you have," and with these words he grabbed the

Peter grabbed the Glass-man by the collar. (P. 241.)

Glass-man by the collar and cried—"Now I have you, Master Glass-man, and I will not let you go until you have granted me a third wish. Give me now at this very moment, on this very spot, two

hundred thousand crown pieces, a house and—oh! oh!!" he shrieked aloud, for the Glass-man had turned into a mass of hot molten glass and burnt his hand. Of the little man himself there was nothing to be seen.

For several days he was reminded of his ingratitude and foolishness by his burnt and swollen hand, but he managed to stifle his conscience and said to himself—"Well, well, even if my factory and everything in it is sold, I have still got Fat Ezekiel to provide me with as much money as I shall require. As long as his pockets are full on a Sunday, I cannot have mine empty."

Just so, Peter, but how if a time should come when they are empty? This was exactly what happened. One Sunday he came driving up to the inn in his carriage and the people looking out of the window remarked: "Here comes Gambling Peter," or "Here comes the Dance Emperor," or "Here comes the rich glass manufacturer."

"I'm not so sure about his riches," said another, "there are grave reports about him in the town and it is said that the bailiffs are to seize his goods for debt."

Peter nodded to the men at the window and called pompously—"Master Innkeeper, is Fat Ezekiel here yet?" "Yes, yes, here I am," said Fat Ezekiel, "we have kept your place, Peter, and we are at the cards already."

So Peter Munk went in and slipped his hand into his pocket and found that Fat Ezekiel must have plenty of money, for his own pockets were quite full.

He sat down to the table and began to play,

losing and winning much as the others did. But as the night began to fall most of the players rose and went home, but not so Peter Munk. He challenged Fat Ezekiel to remain and play on.

At first he was not willing, but presently he consented. "Very well," he said at length, "I will just count my money and then we will throw the dice for five crowns a point, for less than that it is mere child's play." Ezekiel drew out his purse and counted five hundred crowns, so Peter knew exactly how much he had.

But though Ezekiel had won before, he now began to lose his money and his temper too. So sure as he threw double fives Peter threw double sixes; whatever Ezekiel threw, Peter threw higher, until at length he had won all Ezekiel's money with the exception of five crown pieces.

"If I lose this," cried Ezekiel, "I will still go on playing, and try to retrieve my luck; you shall lend me some of your winnings, Peter, for one good comrade always helps another."

"As much as you please," replied Peter, "a hundred crowns if possible," for he was merry over his winnings and in a very good temper.

But again Ezekiel lost and Peter started as he heard a harsh voice behind him say—"Oh! ho! there goes the last coin!"

Peter looked round and saw Dutch Michael standing behind him. In his terror he let fall his money, but Fat Ezekiel saw nothing, but only asked Peter to lend him some money that they might go

on playing. Half in a dream Peter thrust his hand into his pocket. It was empty, he tried the other—empty too. He turned them inside out, but not the smallest copper coin was to be seen, and now he remembered for the first time what his wish had been —that he might always have as much money as Fat Ezekiel—well, Ezekiel had none and so Peter's had all disappeared like smoke.

At first the innkeeper and Fat Ezekiel would not believe that he had no money, but when they saw that his pockets really were empty they were very angry, for they declared he must be a sorcerer and that he had wished his money and his winnings away at home so that he might not have to lend any.

Peter attempted to defend himself, but appearances were against him. Ezekiel declared that the following day he would publish the news all over the Black Forest, and the innkeeper said he should go and denounce Peter as a sorcerer to the magistrate and that he would most assuredly be burnt. Then they flew at him, beat him soundly, tore his jacket off his back, and threw him out of the door of the inn.

No star shone in the sky as Peter crept miserably home, but in spite of that he recognised a dark figure that walked beside him and kept pace with him. At length the figure spoke—"Well, Peter Munk, there is an end to you and your splendour. I could have told you exactly what would happen when you would not listen to me but hurried off to that stupid Glass Dwarf. Now see what you have come to through despising my advice. But try me once, for I am really sorry for your pitiful fate. No one has ever

repented of coming to me for assistance, and if you are not afraid come to me to-morrow to the clump of pine-trees; I will be there if you call me."

But Peter shuddered and ran home as fast as his legs could carry him.

PART II.

When Peter entered his glass factory on the Monday morning he found the bailiffs already in possession. He was asked if he had any money with which he could settle his debts, and on his replying that he had not, his factory, house, stables, horse, carriage and the stock in hand were all seized.

"Well," said he, "since the little man has done nothing for me I will see what the big one will do." And he set off running as fast as though the police were at his heels.

He reached the clump of black pines, and as he passed the spot where he had seen the little Glass-man it seemed as though an invisible hand caught him and held him back. But he tore himself loose and dashed across the boundary line into Dutch Michael's domain. Breathlessly he called: "Dutch Michael, Dutch Michael," and immediately the gigantic figure of the raftsman stood before him.

"So you have come," he said, laughing. "And did they wish to sell up you and your possessions? Well, well, it was the fault of the little man, miser that he is. If one makes a present it may as well be one worth having. But follow me to my house and I will see if we cannot drive a bargain."

"Make a bargain?" thought Peter, "what have I to exchange with him? Have I got to serve him, I wonder?"

Dutch Michael led him up a steep woodland pathway until at length they came to a steep ravine, with rugged rocky sides. Michael sprang down the rugged rocks as though they had been a polished marble staircase, but Peter almost fainted when he saw that the giant grew taller and taller until he was the height of a church tower. He stretched up an arm as long as a weaver's beam, with a hand the size of a parlour table, and bade Peter seat himself upon it and hold tight.

Peter trembled with fright but obeyed, took his seat upon the giant's hand, and held tight to his thumb.

They went down and down, ever deeper, but to Peter's surprise it was not at all dark, indeed it was quite the contrary, for the sun shone so brightly in his eyes that it dazzled him. The further Peter went down, the smaller Michael became, until when they reached the bottom of the ravine he was the same size as he had been when Peter first saw him.

They were standing outside a house, such as a well-to-do peasant might have inhabited, and the room Peter was shown into was much the same as any other room except that it seemed very dreary. A tall clock in a wooden case stood by the wall, an enormous china stove and the usual furniture were all there. Michael invited him to take a seat at the table and, going out, returned speedily with glasses and a flask of wine. He poured it out and they began to talk,

Dutch Michael telling Peter of all the joys there were to be met with in foreign lands. He described the beautiful towns and rivers until Peter conceived a great longing to go and see them.

"Ah!" said Michael craftily, "even if your whole

Michael stretched up an arm, with a hand the size of a parlour table. P. 246.)

body and mind wanted to undertake some great piece of business your poor silly heart would quake with fear. I can't think what a fine fellow like you wants with a heart. When you were called a cheat and a rogue where did you feel it most? Not in your head, I'll be bound! When the officers of the law came and took possession of all your belongings did you have a stomach-ache? Tell me, where did it hurt you most?"

"My heart," replied Peter, placing his hand upon his heaving breast.

"Now forgive me," said Michael, "if I remind you that you have given away many hundred crown pieces to beggars and other rabble. What good has it done you? They blessed you and wished you good health. Did that do you any good? What was it prompted you to put your hand in your pocket every time a beggar held out his ragged hat to you? Your *heart,* I tell you. Neither your eyes, nor your tongue, nor your arm, nor your leg, but your heart. You took things to *heart* as the saying is."

"But how can I help it? I try my best to suppress it; but my heart beats until it hurts me."

"You poor fellow," laughed Michael, "give me that little palpitating thing and see how much better you will feel without it!"

"Give you my heart!" screamed Peter in horror, "why, I should die on the spot. No, that I will not!"

"Of course, you would die if an ordinary physician were to cut out your heart. But with me it is quite a different matter. Come with me, and I will convince you."

He rose and beckoned to Peter to follow him into another room. Peter's heart contracted painfully as he crossed the threshold of this room; but he paid no heed to it, such astonishing sights claimed his attention. There were rows of shelves, and upon these stood glass bottles filled with transparent fluid, and in each of these bottles there was a heart. Every

bottle was labelled and Peter read the names with the greatest curiosity. There was the name of the Chief Magistrate, Fat Ezekiel's, the Dance King, in fact all the principal people in the neighbourhood.

"Observe," said Michael, "all these people have rid themselves of fear and sorrow for life. Not one of these hearts beats with fear or sorrow any more, and their former possessors are very well off without such unquiet guests to disturb them."

"But what do they carry in their breasts in place of them?" enquired Peter, who felt faint and giddy.

"This," replied Michael, and he showed him a heart of stone he had taken from a drawer.

"Oh!" said Peter with a shudder, "a heart of stone? But that must be very cold in one's breast."

"Yes, yes," replied Michael, "quite pleasantly cool. What do you want with a warm heart? Even in winter a glass of good cherry brandy will warm your body better than your heart could, and in summer when it is hot and sultry it is nice and cooling. Then, as I have said, neither grief, nor foolish pity, nor sorrow of any sort can affect such a heart."

"And is that all you have to offer me?" asked Peter ungraciously, "I had hoped for money and you offer me a stone."

"Come," I think a hundred thousand crown pieces would be sufficient for you at first. If you deal advantageously with it you will soon be a millionaire."

"A hundred thousand!" exclaimed the poor charcoal-burner, joyfully. "Come, come, my heart, don't beat so wildly, for we are about to part company. Here, Michael, give me the money and the stone and you may have this disturber of my peace."

"I thought you would prove a sensible fellow," said Michael, "come, we will have another glass of wine and then I will count out the money."

They seated themselves in the next room and drank so much wine that Peter fell asleep.

When he awoke it was to the friendly sound of a post horn, and see, there he was, seated in a beautiful carriage. He put his head out of the window and saw the Black Forest in the distance behind him. At first he could not believe it was himself that sat in the carriage, for his clothes were not the same as those he had worn the day before; but he remembered everything so clearly that he could no longer doubt. "Charcoal Peter am I, and no mistake," he said.

He was surprised he felt no sadness at leaving his home and the Forest where he had lived for so long. Even the thought of his mother whom he was leaving alone, helpless and in dire poverty, provoked no feeling of remorse in him, and he could not call up a tear nor even a sigh. He felt perfectly indifferent.

"Of course," said he, "tears and sighs, homesickness, and grief, come from the heart and, thanks to Dutch Michael, mine is now of stone."

He put his hand to his breast, but nothing moved there. "If he has kept his word as well regarding the hundred thousand dollars as he has kept it respecting my heart, I shall have nothing to complain of;" with that he began to search the carriage. He found everything he could possibly require in the shape of clothing, but no money. But at length he came across a pocket in the lining of the carriage which was stuffed with gold and notes, and letters of credit to all the principal cities.

"Now I have everything I can possibly want," he said, and settling himself comfortably in the corner of his carriage drove away out into the world.

For two years he drove about the country, peering right and left from the windows of his carriage at the houses and villages he passed. When he came into a town he put up at an inn, then went round with a courier, who showed him all the beautiful and interesting sights, not one of which afforded him the least delight, for his heart of stone prevented him taking pleasure in anything. Nothing, however beautiful, appealed to his senses any longer. Nothing was left to him but to eat and drink and sleep—and so he lived without interest or aim in life; to amuse himself he ate and drank, and to prevent his being bored he slept.

Now and again he thought of the days when he had been happy and gay, although he had been obliged to work hard for a livelihood. In those days every beautiful view had delighted him, music and singing had enchanted him, and the simple food his mother cooked for him and brought to him as

he sat beside his kiln had been more appetising than all the dainty dishes he partook of now. As he thought of the past it struck him as very singular that he no longer desired to smile even, whereas formerly the smallest joke had served as an excuse for laughter. When other folks laughed he drew his lips into the form of a grin out of politeness; but his heart no longer laughed. It is true he was never upset over anything, but then he was not really satisfied.

It was not home-sickness or grief; but a sense of blankness, weariness and friendlessness that at length drove him back home.

As he drove out of Strassburg and saw again the beautiful dark pine-trees of his native forest, and looked upon the honest faces of his countrymen, and heard the homely, well-remembered tones of their speech, he placed his hand quickly to his heart, for his blood was coursing wildly through his veins and he felt as though he must both weep and laugh together. But—how foolish! His heart was of stone, and stones are dead and can neither laugh nor weep.

His first visit was to Dutch Michael, who received him with friendliness as he had formerly done. "Michael," said Peter, "I have travelled all over the world and taken pleasure in nothing; I was only bored. It is true that the stone thing I carry in my breast shielded me from a great deal of unpleasantness, I am never angry or sad, but then I am never glad either and I feel only

half alive. Could you not put a little life into the stone heart, or even give me back my old heart? I had it for five-and-twenty years and had become accustomed to it, and even if it makes me

For two years Peter drove about the country. (P. 251.)

commit some foolishness occasionally, still it was a merry, happy heart."

The giant laughed a grim and bitter laugh. "When you are dead, Peter Munk," he replied, "you shall have your soft, feeling heart back again, and experience all the sensations you knew before.

But as long as you are alive you cannot have it. It would have been of little service to you either, in the life of idleness you have been living lately. Why don't you settle down now, marry, build a house, make money? All you require is work; because you were idle you were bored and then you blame your innocent stone heart."

Peter saw that there was sense in what Michael said and made up his mind to devote his time to money-making. Michael gave him another hundred thousand dollars and they parted good friends.

Very soon the news was spread abroad in the Black Forest that Charcoal Peter, or Gambling Peter, had returned, and that he was richer than formerly. As usual, now that he had returned a rich man he was received with open arms by those who had turned their backs on him in his misfortunes. He now pretended that he was a timber merchant, but this was only a blind, his real business was that of a money-lender and corn-dealer.

Very soon half the folks in the Black Forest owed him money, and he charged ten per cent for all he lent. Or again he sold corn to the poor, who had not the money to pay immediately, for three times its worth.

He was first-rate friends with the magistrate now, and when it happened that Peter's debtors did not pay up to the very day the magistrate would come with his officers and sell up their homes and drive father, mother and children out into the forest. At first it caused rich Peter some

inconvenience, for the poor creatures besieged his house, the men begged for some consideration, the women tried to soften his heart of stone, and the children cried for bread. But he bought a pair of fierce dogs to stop the "caterwauling," as he called it, and so soon as a beggar appeared he set his dogs on to him.

But what caused him the most trouble was his poor old mother. She had fallen into extreme poverty, and though her son had returned a rich man he did not attempt to provide for her. She came sometimes to his door, weak and ill, her tottering steps supported by a stick, but she did not venture into the house, for once she had been driven out of it. It was a sore grief to her that she should be dependent on the charity of others when her own son could so well have afforded to care for her in her old age. But his heart of stone was never moved by the sight of the pale worn face and the withered outstretched hand.

When she knocked at his door he drew some coppers from his pocket and gave them to a servant to hand to her. He could hear her trembling voice as she thanked him and wished him well, he heard her coughing pitifully as she crept away, and then he thought no more about the matter, except that he had spent some money with no hope of its being returned.

At last Peter made up his mind to get married. He knew quite well that every father in the Black Forest would be only too glad to let him marry

his daughter, but he was very difficult to please, for he wanted everyone to praise the good sense he had shown in making his choice and to be envious of his good fortune.

So he went to every dance-room in the country-side, but not one of the beautiful maidens he met there did he think sufficiently beautiful. At length he heard that a poor wood-cutter's daughter was the most beautiful and most virtuous maiden in the whole of the Black Forest. She lived quietly, keeping her father's house in beautiful order, and never so much as showed herself at the dance-rooms, not even at holiday times. No sooner did Peter hear of this marvel than he made up his mind to wed her, and rode out to the cottage where she dwelt. The beautiful Lisbeth's father received this fine-looking gentleman with surprise, and was still more astonished when he heard that Peter wished to be his son-in-law. He did not take long to make up his mind, for he supposed that all his proverty and anxious striving would now be at an end, and so he agreed to his request without so much as asking Lisbeth's consent, but she was such an obedient child that she did not venture to object, and so became Mrs. Peter Munk.

But the poor girl was not as happy as she expected to be. She had thought herself an accomplished housekeeper, but she could do nothing to please Master Peter. She was pitiful towards the poor, and, knowing her husband to be a man of means, she thought it no wrong to give them a little money or food. But when Peter happened to see her one

day he told her with an angry glance and in harsh tones that she was wasting his goods. "What did you bring with you," he cried, "that you think you can spend so lavishly? Why, your beggar father's staff would scarcely serve to heat the soup, and yet you throw money about as though you were a princess. If I catch you doing it again you shall feel the weight of my hand."

The beautiful Lisbeth wept bitterly when she was alone, and wished herself back again in her father's poor little cottage instead of living in the grand house of the rich but miserly and hard-hearted Peter Munk. Had she known that he had a heart of stone in his breast and could love neither her nor anyone else she would not have been so surprised.

Sometimes, as she sat in her doorway, a beggar would pass by and hold out his hand in entreaty. Then Lisbeth closed her eyes tightly that she might not see his misery, and clenched her hands so that they should not involuntarily stray to her pocket for a coin. And so it happened that Lisbeth came to be ill-thought of throughout the whole of the Black Forest, and it was said that she was even more miserly than Peter himself.

But one day Lisbeth sat by the door of her house and sang a little song as she twirled her distaff, for she was merry because the weather was fine and Peter had ridden out into the country. She saw a little old man coming along, bent beneath the weight of an enormous sack and panting pain-

fully. She looked at him pityingly, thinking to herself that it was not right that such an old man should be so heavily laden.

Just as the old man reached Lisbeth he stumbled and almost fell beneath the weight of his sack. "Have pity, dear lady, and give me a drink of water," he gasped, "I can go no further, I am completely exhausted."

"You are too old to carry such a heavy weight," said Lisbeth.

"True," replied the old man, "but it is on account of my poverty that I am forced to go round as a carrier, otherwise I should not be able to earn a livelihood. But a rich lady like yourself knows nothing of the pinch of poverty or how good a cool draught of fresh water seems on such a hot day."

On hearing this Lisbeth hurried into the house, took a pitcher from the shelf and filled it with water, and when she turned to hand it to the old man and saw how wretched and tired out he looked as he sat upon his sack, she felt so much pity for him, that she could not resist giving him more substantial help. So she set the water aside and filled a cup with red wine and gave it to him with a large slice of rye bread.

"This will do you more good than water, seeing that you are so old," she said, "but be careful, do not drink so hastily, take a morsel of bread with the wine."

The old man looked at her with tears in his

THE COLD HEART

"She saw a little old man coming along" (p. 2)

eyes—"I am very old," he said, "but in all my life I have seen few so pitiful as you or whose gifts were given with such gracious kindness. But such a kind heart will not go unrewarded."

"No, indeed, and the reward she shall have at once," cried a terrible voice, and when they turned, there stood Peter with a face purple with rage.

"And so you give my best wine to beggars, and serve it in my own cup, too. Now you shall have your reward."

Lisbeth threw herself at his feet and begged for forgiveness, but his heart of stone knew no pity; he turned the whip he was carrying round and struck her forehead with the ebony handle with so much force that she sank back lifeless into the arms of the old man. Immediately he began to regret what he had done and stooped to see if she were yet alive. But the little old man spoke in well-known tones: "Do not trouble, Charcoal Peter, she was the sweetest and loveliest flower in the whole of the Black Forest; now that you have trodden it under foot it will never bloom again."

Every drop of blood forsook Peter's cheeks—"So it is you," he said. "Well, what is done, is done. I trust you will not give me up to the hand of the low for this murder."

"Miserable wretch!" replied the little Glass-man. "What satisfaction should I have in giving your mortal body to the hangman? It is no earthly

court of justice you have to fear, but another and a more awful one, for you have sold your soul to the evil one."

"And if I have sold my heart," screamed Peter, "who, but you, is to blame for it, you and the deceitful tricks you played on me with the treasures I was to gain through you? You drove me to seek other help, that has been my undoing, and so the responsibility lies with you."

But scarcely had he spoken before the little Glass-man began to grow bigger. He grew and he swelled until he became a huge giant, his eyes were as big as saucers and his mouth was the size of a baker's oven out of which flames began to dart. Peter threw himself on his knees, for his stone heart did not prevent his limbs from shaking like an aspen tree.

With hands like vulture's claws the wood spirit seized him by his neck, twisted him about as the whirlwind does the dry leaves, and then dashed him to the ground so that his ribs cracked.

"Earth-worm!" he cried, in a voice that rolled like thunder, "I could shatter you to pieces if I would, for you have offended the Lord of the Forest. But for the sake of this dead woman, who fed me and gave me drink, I will give you eight days' grace If during that time you do not repent, I will come and grind your bones to powder and you will depart in the midst of your sins."

It was evening when some passing men found

Peter Munk lying unconscious on the ground; they turned him over and sought for some sign of life, but for some time in vain. At length one of them went into the house and fetched some water and sprinkled it on his face. Then he drew a deep breath, groaned and opened his eyes, looked around

Some passing men found Peter Munk lying unconscious on the ground.
(P. 263.)

him anxiously, and asked for his wife, but no one had seen her.

He thanked the men for their assistance, crept into his house and searched from cellar to attic, but in vain; what he had hoped might prove a bad dream was bitter reality.

Now that he was left quite alone, strange

thoughts came to him; he had no fear, for was not his heart cold? But when he thought of the death of his wife, it reminded him that his own death would come one day. And how heavily laden with sin he would be! His soul would be weighed down by the tears of the needy, the curses of those he had ruined, the groans of the wretched ones that had been dragged down by his dogs, the quiet despair of his own mother, and the innocent blood of Lisbeth. How would he be able to answer her old father when he came and demanded: "Where is my daughter, your wife?"

He was tormented in his dreams, and repeatedly awoke, hearing a sweet voice calling to him: "Peter, Peter, see that you get a warmer heart." Even when he was awake it was the same, and he knew the voice to be Lisbeth's. He went down to the inn to divert his thoughts, and there he met Fat Ezekiel. He sat down opposite to him and they began to talk of all sorts of things, the weather, the war, the stars, and at last of death and how quickly some had died off.

Then Peter asked the fat one what he thought of death and the hereafter.

Ezekiel answered that the body died and was buried, but the soul soared up to heaven or down to the evil one.

"Is the heart buried with the body?" asked Peter.

"Certainly that is buried too!"

"But if one had no heart?" queried Peter.

Ezekiel looked at him in horror. "What do you say? Are you trying to make game of me? Do you mean to say that I have no heart?"

"Oh! yes, you have a heart right enough," said Peter, "but it is made of stone."

Ezekiel stared at him in astonishment, looked round to see that no one was listening, and then said: "How do you know that? Has your own ceased to beat also?"

"It beats no longer, at least not in my breast," answered Peter Munk. "But tell me, now you understand how it is with me, what will happen to our *hearts?*"

"Why worry about that, my friend," laughed Ezekiel. "You are alive at present and that is the best of having a heart of stone, one is never afraid of such thoughts."

"Quite true, but one thinks about them all the same," said Peter, "and I can remember still how they would have frightened me once upon a time."

"Of course, we can't expect things to go very well with us," said Ezekiel. "Once upon a time I asked a schoolmaster about it and he told me that our hearts would be weighed; the light ones went up on the scale and those heavy with sin went down, so I expect our stone hearts will be pretty heavy."

"Sometimes I am a little uncomfortable to think that my heart *should* be so indifferent to such things," said Peter.

So they talked together. That night Peter heard the voice whispering five or six times in his ear: "Peter, Peter, see that you get a warmer heart!" He felt no remorse for what he had done, but when he told his servants that his wife had gone on a journey he wondered to himself whither she had journeyed.

Six whole days and nights passed and ever it seemed to him there was a voice whispering in his ear, and he could think of nothing but the little Glass-man and his warning. And so, on the seventh day, he sprang out of bed and said: "Well, I will see if I cannot get a warm heart again, instead of this unfeeling stone in my bosom, for it makes my life both tedious and lonely." So he dressed himself in his best and rode off to the clump of black pines. When he reached the outskirts he dismounted, tied up his horse, and hurried to the summit of the hill, and as he came to the big pine-tree he repeated his verse:

"Owner of all in the pine-woods green,
Many a hundred years thou hast seen,
Thine all the lands where the pine-trees grow—
To the Sunday-born thy face now show!"

At once the little Glass-man appeared, but he did not seem at all friendly; but looked gloomy and sad. He wore a coat of black glass, and a long crape veil floated from his hat, and Peter knew very well for whom he wore mourning.

"What do you want with me, Peter Munk?" he asked in deep tones.

"There is still a wish due to me, Mr. Glass-man," answered Peter with downcast eyes.

"Is it possible for a heart of stone to wish for anything?" said the little man. "You have everything a man of your bad disposition requires, and I shall not readily grant your request."

That night Peter heard the voice whispering in his ear.
(P. 266.)

"But you promised me three wishes," said Peter "and one I have not yet made use of."

"I have the right to withhold it if it is a foolish wish," said the little man, "but say on, what do you want?"

"Take this cold stone out of my breast and

give me back my warm living heart in place of it," Peter asked.

"Had I aught to do with the exchange?" demanded the little man. "Am I Dutch Michael, who gives fortunes and stone hearts away? You must recover your heart from him."

"But he will never give it back to me," answered Peter.

"Bad as you are, I am sorry for you," said the little man after a few moments' consideration, and as your wish is not a foolish one I will promise to assist you. Listen, you will never obtain your heart by force and so you must employ cunning, and it may not be a difficult task, for stupid Michael always was and stupid he will remain, although he prides himself upon being extremely clever. So go straight to him and do exactly as I tell you." The Glass-man then gave Peter a little cross of pure transparent glass, and proceeded to give him minute instructions as to how he should act. "He cannot take your life," said the little man, "and he will let you go free if you hold this out to him and whisper a prayer. As soon as you have obtained what you want come back here to me."

Peter Munk took the little cross, made sure he remembered every word the little man had told him, and went straight off to the spot where Michael was wont to be found. He called him three times by name and at once the giant appeared. "And so you have killed your wife," he said

with a horrible laugh. "Well, I should have done the same. Did she not waste your fortune on beggars? But it would be best for you to leave the country for a time, for there will be a fine fuss when it is found out; and so I suppose you want money and have come to fetch it from me?"

"You have guessed it exactly," replied Peter, "but I shall require a good big sum this time. It is a long way to America."

Michael went in advance and led the way to his home. As soon as he reached it he went to a chest and took out several packets of gold. Whilst he was counting it Peter said: "You are a rascal, Michael, for you deceived me, telling me that I had a stone in my breast, and that you had my heart."

"And is it not so?" asked the astonished Michael, "can you feel your heart beat? Do you know what fear or remorse is?"

"Ah! you have just made my heart stand still, but I have it still in my breast and so has Ezekiel. It was he who told me you had lied to us; you are not the one to take one's heart out without his feeling it, that would be magic."

"But I assure you I did," said Michael angrily. "You, and Ezekiel, and all the other rich people who have had dealings with me have hearts of stone, and your own original hearts I have here, shut up in a room."

"Now how easily the lies trip from your tongue!" laughed Peter. "You must make some one else believe that. I have seen dozens of similar

tricks on my travels. The hearts you have in your room there are merely waxen ones. You are a rich fellow, I allow, but you do not understand magic."

The giant became furious and tore open the door of the room. "Come in and read all these labels; look at this, look at that, do you see it is labelled 'Peter Munk's Heart!' do you see how it throbs? Could you make a waxen one do that?"

"All the same, it is wax," said Peter. "A real heart does not beat like that, I have mine still in my breast. No, it is evident you do not understand magic."

"But I will prove it to you!" cried the angry Michael; "you shall feel for yourself that it is your own heart."

He tore Peter's vest open, took a stone from his breast and showed it to him. Then he took the real heart, breathed on it, and put it carefully in its place, and immediately to his delight Peter felt it begin to beat.

"Now what have you to say?" laughed Michael.

"Truly you were in the right," answered Peter, carefully drawing the little cross from his pocket. "I would not have believed it possible for a man to do such a thing."

"Well, it was as I said," answered Michael; "you see I do understand magic, but come, now, I must put the stone back in your breast."

"Softly, softly, Michael!" cried Peter, and he took a step backwards and held out the cross towards him. "With a morsel of cheese the mouse

is caught, and this time it is you who have been caught." And he at once began to murmur the first prayer that came to his lips.

At once Michael began to dwindle away, fell down on the ground and writhed like a worm, and groaned and sighed, and all the hearts in the glass bottles began to throb and beat until it sounded like the clock-maker's workshop. But Peter was afraid, and his courage began to fail him, and he turned and ran out of the house and, driven by fear, he climbed the steep face of the rocky ravine, for he could hear Michael raging and stamping and uttering fearful oaths.

Come in and read all these labels," said the giant. (P. 270.)

As soon as he reached the top he ran quickly to the clump of black pines. A fearful thunderstorm broke out suddenly, lightning flashed from left to right of him, striking the trees about him.

but he reached the domain of the little Glass-man in safety.

His heart was beating with joy, simply because it *did* beat. But suddenly he saw with horror that his past life had been even as the the terrible thunder-storm that had dealt destruction right and left in the beautiful forest. He thought of Lisbeth, his good and beautiful wife, whom he had murdered on account of his avarice, and he saw himself as an outcast of humanity. When he reached the little hill where the Glass-man dwelt he was weeping bitterly.

The Glass-man sat beneath the pine-tree and smoked a pipe, and he looked more cheerful than previously. "Why do you weep, Charcoal Peter?" he asked. "Did you not get your heart? Have you still a stone in your breast?"

"Ah! sir!" sighed Peter, "when I had a heart of stone I never wept, my eyes were as dry as the land in July; but now my heart is breaking as I think of all I have done. My debtors I drove out to misery and want, and set my dogs upon the poor and sick, and you know alas! how my whip fell upon that snow-white brow!"

"Peter, you have been a great sinner!" said the little man. "Money and idleness spoilt you; when your heart became as a stone you could feel neither joy, nor sorrow, neither remorse nor pity. But repentance can make amends and if I knew for certain that you were sorry for your past life I would still do something for you."

"I ask for nothing more," answered Peter, and

let his head sink mournfully upon his breast. "All is over for me, never again can I rejoice, and what can I do alone in the world? My mother will never forgive me for what I have done; even now, maybe, I have brought her to her grave, monster that I am. And Lisbeth, my wife! It were a kindness to strike me dead, Master Glass-man, so that my miserable life were at an end."

"Good," replied the little man, "if you insist, well, I have my axe near at hand."

He took his pipe quietly from his mouth, tapped it and put it back again. Then he rose slowly and stepped behind the pine-tree. But Peter sat down upon the grass weeping, his life had become worthless to him, and patiently he awaited the stroke of death. Shortly afterwards he heard light footsteps behind him and thought, "He is coming now!"

"Look round, Peter Munk!" cried the little man. Peter wiped the tears from his eyes and, looking round, saw—his mother, and Lisbeth, his wife, smiling at him. He sprang up joyfully, "Then you are not dead, Lisbeth? And you are here also, Mother, and have forgiven me?"

"They pardon you," said the little Glass-man, "because you are truly penitent, and everything shall be forgotten. Go home now to your father's cottage and be a charcoal-burner as before; if you are honest and industrious you will learn to respect your work, and your neighbours will love and esteem you more than if you had ten tons of gold."

Thus spoke the little Glass-man, and then bade him farewell.

The three happy people praised and blessed him and turned towards home.

Peter's splendid house was no longer standing. It had been struck by lightning and burnt to the ground, together with all his money and treasures, but it was no great distance to the old hut, and so they turned their steps towards it and were not in the least troubled about the great loss.

But what was their surprise on reaching the little hut to find it had become a fine farm-house, furnished throughout with simplicity, but with everything that was necessary and good.

"That is the work of the little Glass-man," cried Peter.

"How beautiful everything is," said Lisbeth; "I shall be far happier and more at home here than in the great big house with its many servants."

From that time Peter became an industrious and honest fellow. He was contented with what he had and plied his trade without grumbling; and so it came to pass that through his own exertions he became well off, and respected and loved by everyone in the Forest

He never quarrelled with his wife, honoured his mother, and gave to the poor who came knocking at his door.

After a time a beautiful boy came to them, to add to their happiness, and then Peter went to the clump of pine-trees and again recited his

little rhyme, but the Glass-man did not show himself.

"Master Glass-man," cried Peter loudly, "do listen to me, for I only meant to ask you to be godfather to my little son!"

But there was no reply, only a little breath of wind sighed through the pine-trees and blew a few cones to the ground.

"Well, I will take these as a remembrance, as you will not show yourself to me," said Peter, and popped the cones into his pocket, and went home. But when he took off his best coat and his mother shook out the pockets before laying it away in the chest, out tumbled four fine big rolls of gold pieces. That was the good Glass-man's christening present to *little* Peter.

And so they lived happily ever after, and when Peter Munk was an old man with grey hair he was wont to say: "It is better to be content with little, than to have money and possessions and a cold heart."

THE ADVENTURES OF SAID

Benezar and the baby Said.
(P. 276).

AT the time when Harun Al-Raschid was ruler of Bagdad there lived in Balsora a man named Benezar. He had a sufficiently large fortune to be able to live comfortably and at ease without working for a livelihood.

Even when his son was born he did not change his mode of living, for he said: "Wherefore should I wear myself out working at a trade, just so that I may be able to leave Said, my son, another thousand gold pieces if I am lucky, or a thousand less if I am unlucky? What is enough for two is enough for three, as the saying is, and if he turns out well he shall want for nothing."

And so he announced his intention of not allowing his son to become a merchant, but took care to

study learned books with him, and as, according to his ideas, besides learning and reverence for age, nothing became a young man more than a knowledge of arms and a courageous disposition, he had him carefully instructed in the skilful handling of weapons and all modes of defence.

And so Said was able to compare favourably not only with youths of his own age, but with his elders, as an excellent fighter, and as for riding and swimming none could compete with him.

When he was eighteen years of age his father sent him to Mecca to worship at the grave of the Prophet, as was customary.

Before he set out his father sent for him, praised his good conduct, gave him some good advice, and provided him with money for the journey. Then he told him the following story. "I am," said he, "a man who is above sharing the superstitions of the lower classes. It is true that I like to amuse myself by listening to stories of fairies and enchanters, but I certainly do not believe, as many of the uneducated do, that there is any truth in the suggestion that they are able to have an influence on the lives and actions of men. Your mother, however, who died twelve years ago, believed in them as firmly as she believed in the Koran; indeed, she confided to me once, after making me promise never to divulge her words to anyone but her child, that she had been in communication with a fairy from the day of her birth. I tried to laugh her out of the idea, but I must confess, Said, that at your birth such strange

things occurred that even I was taken by surprise. All day long there had been a thunderstorm and the sky was so dark that it was impossible to read without a light. About four o'clock in the afternoon I was told a little son had been born to me. I hurried to your mother's apartments to see you and bless you, but I found her door closed and all her attendants standing outside it, and on my questioning them they told me your mother had turned them all out because she wished to be alone. I knocked at the door, but in vain, it remained closed.

"As I stood unwillingly amongst the attendants outside your mother's door the thunderstorm suddenly ceased, as though it had never been, and the most surprising thing about it was that although the sky was a beautiful deep blue above our dear city of Balsora, all around it lay clouds as black as night and lightning flashed and darted around the circle of blue.

"Whilst I was observing this spectacle with great curiosity, the door of my wife's room flew open, but I would not allow the maids to enter and went in alone. As I entered my nostrils were assailed with an overpowering scent of roses, carnations and hyacinths. Your mother laid you in my arms and pointed out a little silver whistle which hung suspended from your neck by a gold chain, as fine as silk.

"'The beneficent fairy of whom I told you once has been here,' said she, 'and has given your son this present.'

"'Perhaps she was the witch who made the

weather fine and left behind her this scent of roses and carnations?' I asked jokingly. 'She might have given him something better than a silver whistle, a

"*There is your gift.*" (P280)

purse of gold or a fine horse would have been more acceptable.' Your mother begged me not to make fun, as fairies are easily offended and their blessings then turn to curses.

"So to please her I said no more; but six years later she mentioned it to me again, for in spite of her youth she felt that she was at the point of death. She gave me the whistle and told me to give it to you when you were twenty years of age, and on no account to let you out of my sight before you were that age. There is your gift," proceeded Benezar, taking a silver whistle attached to a long gold chain from a casket, "I give it to you in your eighteenth year, instead of your twentieth, as you are starting on your travels, and before you return I may be gathered to my fathers.

"I do not see any reason for your remaining another two years with me as your mother wished, or you are a good, sensible young fellow, and understand how to handle weapons as well as though you were four-and-twenty years old at least, and therefore there is no reason why you should not be declared of age to-day as though you really were twenty. And now depart in peace, and in happiness or misfortune, from which Heaven defend you, remember your father."

Said took an affectionate and touching farewell of his father, hung the chain around his neck, stuck the whistle in his girdle, swung himself upon his horse, and rode to the place from which the caravan for Mecca started. In a short time eighty camels and a large number of riders had assembled; the caravan was in motion, and Said rode out of the gates of Balsora, his native town, which he was not to see again for a long time.

The novelty of the journey and the different circumstances in which he found himself distracted his thoughts at first, but when they approached the desert and the surroundings became more desolate and barren, he had time to think of many things, especially his father's last words to him.

He took out his whistle, looked at it and placed it between his lips, to judge if it had a good tone. But it gave forth no tones at all, although he blew until he nearly cracked his cheeks. Annoyed at the useless gift he had received, he tucked the whistle carelessly away again. But presently his thoughts turned to his mother's mysterious words. He had often heard of fairies, but he had never been able to ascertain that any of their neighbours in Balsora had any connection whatever with supernatural beings; the stories he had heard had always had their foundation in foreign lands and in olden times, and so he thought that fairies and such-like apparitions had ceased to visit mankind or to take an interest in their destinies. But in spite of this he could not help thinking that something very strange had happened to his mother and he racked his brains to think what it could all mean, and thus it happened that he was so wrapped in his own thoughts that he rode all day long without taking notice of the other travellers, who sang and laughed as they journeyed on.

Said was a handsome young man with bright, fearless eyes, a sweet, good-natured mouth, and, although so young, he had a very dignified bearing. The stately manner in which he rode his horse, fully

equipped as he was in warlike attire, drew the attention of many of the travellers upon him. One old man who rode beside him was so well pleased with him that he endeavoured by drawing him into conversation to find out if his character fitted his appearance, and Said, who had been brought up to reverence age, answered politely and modestly, but withal so cleverly and prudently, that the old man was delighted with him. But as Said's whole mind was concentrated on one subject it was not long before he led up to it in conversation, and he asked the old man if he believed in fairies and such-like spirits and whether he considered they were able to have any influence over the lives of men.

The old man stroked his beard and shook his head slowly. "I have frequently heard of such visions," he said, "but I cannot say that I have personally encountered any supernatural creature whatever; at the same time I have heard of numberless cases of fairies and genii appearing to others." He then began to recount to Said a number of such extraordinary stories that at last the young man's head was in a whirl, and he could not but believe that the strange circumstances that were supposed to have taken place at his birth were actually true, and that he was under the protection of some powerful fairy who would assist him if ever, finding himself in danger, he blew the little silver whistle. He dreamt that night of fairies, genii, castles in the air, and magic horses.

But unfortunately the next day he was disillusioned. The caravan had travelled all day at a leisurely pace,

when towards evening some dark objects were observed at the most distant point in the desert; some thought it was only another caravan approaching, but Said's old friend cried out to all to be prepared for an attack, for without doubt a horde of wild Arabs was approaching.

The men seized their weapons, the women and merchandise were placed in the centre, and all was prepared for an attack.

The dark mass moved slowly across the plain, looking at the distance like a number of storks about to wing their flight to foreign lands. But as they approached nearer they increased their pace, and very soon it was seen they were a body of men armed with lances who gashed forward with incredible swiftness upon the caravan. The men defended themselves bravely; but the robber force consisted of four hundred men, and they surrounded the caravan on every side, attacking skilfully with their lances. At this terrible moment Said, who had fought with the bravest, remembered his whistle and, placing it to his lips, blew with all his might. Alas! he let it fall again quickly, for it emitted not a sound. Enraged over this bitter disappointment he took aim at an Arab, who, by reason of his magnificent apparel, was distinguished from the rest. He shot him through the heart and the man fell from his horse—dead.

"Allah! what have you done, young man," cried the old man. "Now we are lost indeed."

And so it appeared, for when the robbers saw this man fall they uttered horrible yells and renewed

the attack so fiercely that the few men who were still unwounded were soon dispersed. Said was surrounded in a few moments by five or six, but he wielded his lance so dexterously that no one could approach him. At length one of them was about to despatch him with an arrow when a comrade made a sign to him to desist, and before Said could determine what the new mode of attack was to be he felt a lassoo flung over his head; he made frantic efforts to free himself from it, but in vain, the cord only drew tighter and tighter—he was a prisoner. The caravan was now completely overcome, some of the men killed, the rest captured and, as the Arabs did not all belong to one company, they divided the prisoners and booty between them, some of them journeying to the South, others towards the East.

Four armed men rode beside Said and regarded him with angry looks, and he felt sure that the man he had killed must have heen a person of importance, probably a prince or chieftain. He felt thankful that he had incurred their special wrath, for he quite expected they were taking him to their camp to kill him, and death was preferable to slavery, which was the only other alternative. The armed men watched his every movement and threatened him with their spears if he attempted to turn round. However, he managed to turn his head for a moment and was delighted to see that the old man who had been his companion, and whom he had believed to be dead, was accompanying his party.

At length he saw trees and tents in the distance,

Said made frantic efforts to free himself. (P. 284.)

and as they came nearer a number of women and children came to meet them, and scarcely had these exchanged a few words with the robbers than they broke into fearful weeping and screaming and, raising their arms towards Said, cursed him loudly.

"This is he," they shrieked, "who has killed the great and noble Almansor, the bravest of all men, this is he, and he shall die and we will give his flesh to the jackals to devour."

They pelted him with pieces of wood, clods of

earth, and anything they could lay hands on, so fiercely, that one of Said's guards was obliged to intervene. "Back, unruly ones," he cried, "give place, you women; the man who slew the noble Almansor must die, it is true, but by the hand of a brave man, not by the hand of a woman."

When they reached an open space amongst the tents they stopped, the prisoners were fastened together in couples, and the booty carried into the tents. Said, however, was bound alone and was led into a large tent where an old man sat. He was magnificently clothed and his stately mien showed that he was the chief of the robber band. The men who led Said in approached him with sorrowful looks and bent heads.

"The shrieks of the women have broken to me the news of what has occurred," he said majestically, "and your attitudes confirm it; Almansor has fallen."

"Almansor has fallen, indeed," answered the men, "but we bring here to you his murderer in order that you may determine what manner of death he shall die. Shall we shoot at him from a distance with our arrows, or shall we chase him down a pathway of spears, or shall we hang him, or have him torn to pieces by horses?"

"Who are you?" asked Selim, the chief, glancing gloomily at the captive, who stood before him waiting courageously to meet his death.

Said answered briefly and with truth.

"Did you murder my son treacherously, attacking him with arrow or spear from the rear?"

"Not so," replied Said, "I killed him in fair fight. and because he had slain eight of my companions before my eyes."

"Is it as he says?" demanded Selim of Said's guard.

"Yes, it is true enough," one of them made reply, "Almansor was killed in fair fight."

"Then he only did the same as we would have done," replied Selim; "he killed his enemy who would have robbed him of life and liberty, therefore unbind him at once."

The men stared at him in surprise and began to obey him most unwillingly—"Is the murderer of your brave son to go unpunished?" one of them asked, "I would we had killed him at once instead of bringing him here."

"He shall not die!" cried Selim: "I claim him as my share of the booty; he shall be my servant and I will have him in my own tent."

Said could find no words with which to thank the old man—the men left the tent grumbling. As soon as they had communicated Selim's decision to the women and children who were waiting outside to witness Said's execution, there was a terrible outcry, some of them vowing to avenge Almansor's death, as his own father would not.

The rest of the prisoners were divided amongst their capturers, some were released in order that they might go and treat for a ransom for some of their wealthy prisoners, and some were kept as slaves and sent to tend the herds of cattle; many who had formerly

ten or twelve slaves to wait upon them were now set to perform the most menial duties. But not so Said. Was it his brave, heroic, appearance which prepossessed Selim in his favour or was it the intervention of some good fairy? There was no knowing which, but Said was certainly treated more like a son than a servant. But the strange affection of Selim for Said caused jealousy amongst the others. Everywhere he encountered hostile glances, and when he passed through the camp he heard murmurings and angry words, and sometimes an arrow would whizz past his breast, and at such times he could not help thinking that the little whistle he carried must in some way protect him.

If he complained to Selim it was useless, for the whole camp seemed banded together to shield the would-be murderer and to take part against Said.

And so one day Selim said: "I had hoped that you might have stood to me in place of my son whom you slew, but the fault lies neither with you nor me. They are all embittered against you, and I find I am unable to protect you. Of what good would it be to me after your death to punish your murderer?

"As soon as the men return from their present expedition I shall say I have received the ransom money from your father and send you away in charge of several trustworthy men."

"But there is no one I can trust beside yourself," said Said. "They will murder me as soon as we are well on the way."

"I will make them take an oath to protect you that no one has ever yet broken."

A few days later the men returned to camp and Selim kept his promise. He gave the youth weapons, a handsome robe, and a horse, summoned the fighting men and chose five from them to serve as Said's escort, forced them to take a solemn oath that they would not kill him, and bade him farewell with tears.

Sometimes an arrow would whizz past his breast. (P. 288.)

The five men rode in gloomy silence through the desert with Said. The young man could not fail to see how unwillingly they executed their commission, and what troubled him also was that two of his escort had been present at the fight in which he had killed Almansor. They had ridden for about eight hours when Said noticed they were whispering together and that they looked at him more evilly than previously even. He strained every effort to overhear what they said and became aware that they were speaking in a mysterious

language that they only used amongst themselves when it was necessary to keep the matters in hand perfectly secret. Selim had, however, taken care to instruct Said in this language, so that he was now able to understand what they were talking about, which was not a very reassuring subject!"

"Here is the spot where we attacked the caravan," said one, "and where one of the bravest of men fell by the hand of a mere boy."

"The wind has obliterated the tracks of his horses' feet," replied another, "but I have not forgotten where they were."

"And to our shame the one by whose hand he fell still lives," said a third. "Has ever such a thing been heard of, that a father would not revenge the death of his only son? Selim, without doubt, is becoming old and childish."

"But if the father neglects his duty," spoke a fourth, "then it is left to a friend to revenge his fallen friend. Here on this spot ought we to strike him down. That is as it should be according to ancient custom."

"But we swore to protect him," cried the fifth. "We may not kill him, for we must not break our oath."

"That is true," said another, "and therefore the assassin must not die by the hands of his enemies."

"Wait!" cried the most forbidding-looking of them all, "old Selim has a wise head, but not so wise as he would have us believe. It is true we swore that we would spare the man's life, but if we leave him

alive, but bound hand and foot, the burning sun and the sharp teeth of the jackals will soon make an end of him."

Said had made up his mind to the worst, but was determined to make an effort to regain his liberty. Suddenly he turned his horse aside, and, setting spurs to it, rode like the wind across the desert. But the five robbers understood the desert better than he did. In a moment they separated, urged their horses forward at a furious pace, and speedily succeeded in surrounding the unhappy youth. They would not use their weapons on account of the oath they had taken, but once more using a lassoo they threw it over his head and brought him to the ground; then they beat him unmercifully, bound his hands and feet with ropes, and left him lying upon the burning sand.

Said begged for mercy, promising them a handsome sum as ransom: but they laughed mockingly and rode away. He listened to the sound of their horses' hoofs for a few moments and then gave himself up for lost. He thought of the grief of his father when his only son did not return to him, and he thought of his own misery, in being left to die such a terrible death in the flower of his youth. The sun rose higher and higher and scorched his head and face. With great difficulty he succeeded in rising to his feet. But this gave him little relief. The little whistle had fallen from his girdle and hung loosely from his neck. He succeeded at length, after great trouble, in taking it between his lips; but again it failed him. Overcome with despair he sank down

upon the sand once more and speedily became unconscious.

Several hours later he awoke, hearing a voice close to him and feeling himself seized by the shoulder. He uttered a cry of horror, for he thought it was a jackal that was about to devour him. Next he felt a touch upon his legs, and became aware that it was not the claws of a wild beast that were mauling him —but the hands of a human being tending him carefully, and then he heard a voice say, "He is alive, but evidently takes us for enemies."

At length Said opened his eyes and saw a little man bending over him. He was very fat and had small eyes and a very long beard. He spoke to the young man in friendly tones, helped him to rise, gave him food and drink, and told him as he refreshed himself that he was a merchant from Bagdad, named Kalum-Bek, and that he dealt in shawls and veils for women. He had been on a business journey and was on his way home when he found Said lying half dead upon the sand. The young man's brilliant apparel and the glittering jewels in his dagger had attracted his attention, and he had used every effort to revive him, and at length he had succeeded.

The young man thanked him for saving his life, for he saw that without this man's intervention he must have perished miserably, and as he had no means of helping himself and did not take kindly to the idea of trudging afoot through the desert, he thankfully accepted a seat on one of the heavily-laden camels and determined to go to Bagdad first,

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and then see if he could join himself to a party travelling to Balsora.

On the way the merchant discoursed on the excellent qualities of the Ruler of the Faithful, Harun Al-Raschid. He told him of his love of justice and his shrewdness, and how he could unravel the deepest mysteries of the law in the most remarkable manner. "But he takes good care to keep himself informed as to what is taking place among his subjects," said Kalum-Bek. "His chief Chamberlain Messour is my cousin, and he tells me that he never goes to bed as other folks do, but just contents himself with a few hours' sleep in the morning, but every night he disguises himself as a merchant or sailor, or in some everyday costume, and wanders about Bagdad to see that everything is right and in order, as it should be. That is the reason that folks are so polite to everyone who speaks to them, for it may just as well be the Caliph as some dirty Arab, and there is sufficient timber around Bagdad to provide rods to whip the whole populace."

Listening to his stories Said could not help being glad that he was to visit Bagdad and probably see the celebrated Harun Al-Raschid in spite of the fact that he was so anxious to see his father.

They reached Bagdad in ten days' time and Said was astounded at the magnificence of the city, which was then at the height of its glory. The merchant invited him to come to his house and Said accepted willingly, for he had no money to pay for a lodging. The day after his arrival he dressed himself carefully

in the splendid clothing bestowed on him by the robber chieftain and thought to himself that he need not be ashamed to go out into the streets and show himself. But at that moment the merchant entered and looked at him with a cunning smile.

"It is all very well, young sir," said he, "to have a fine appearance; but have you money in your pockets to suit your attire? What do you intend to do with yourself? It seems to me you are a bit of a dreamer, and do not consider the future at all."

"Dear Kalum-Bek," said the youth, blushing, for he was much confused, "it is true I have no money, but perhaps you will be kind enough to advance me a little, so that I may journey home, and my father will not fail to refund it to you."

"Your father, fellow?" cried the merchant, laughing loudly, "I verily believe the sun has injured your brain. Do you suppose I believe a single word of the fairy tales you told me in the desert, about your father being a rich man in Balsora, you his only son, and about the robbers attacking you and so on? I know that all rich people in Balsora are merchants and I have had dealings with most of them. But I never heard of one named Benezar. Therefore, it is quite certain that either you never came from Balsora or else you are the son of a poor man, and to a young vagabond like you I will certainly advance no money."

Said turned pale with rage; but nothing that he could say would apparently convince the merchant that he was speaking the truth. Said reminded him

how he had been found lying bound in the desert, but the merchant replied that it was quite likely he was a robber himself and that the persons he had attacked had overcome and bound him.

At length, as the merchant would advance him no money, Said decided that there was nothing left for him to do but to apply to the Caliph for assistance; but Kalum-Bek reminded him that in order to approach the Caliph he would have to apply to Messour the Chamberlain, and that he would give his cousin a hint of the sort of liar Said was. Presently the artful fellow pretended to relent.

"I pity you on account of your youth," he said, "there is still hope that you may improve, and I am willing to employ you in my shop in the Bazaar. You shall serve me for a year and at the end of that time if you are not satisfied to remain with me I will give you your wages and let you go where you will. I give you until mid-day to decide. If you consent, well and good; if not I shall seize your robe and dagger and all you have that is worth anything to repay myself for the cost of your journey here, and the price of the seat on the camel. After that I shall have you turned out of my house and you may go and beg in the bazaars or at the doors of the mosques."

With these words the wicked little creature left the poor young man, who gazed after him with contemptuous eyes. He was disgusted to think of the cunning way in which he had been entrapped. He thought he would escape, but found the windows were barred and the door locked and so, after some

consideration, he came to the conclusion that for the present he had better agree to the terms offered him and serve in the shop. There seemed nothing else to be done, for without money he could not hope to reach Balsora; but he made up his mind to appeal to the Caliph on the first opportunity.

The following day Kalum-Bek took his new servant to his shop. He showed him the shawls and veils and stuffs in which he dealt and instructed him in his duties.

Dressed as a merchant's assistant he was to stand at the door of the shop and show off the wares. And now Said understood why the bad little man wanted him.

Kalum-Bek, being short and very ugly, excited the derision of the passers-by as he stood inviting custom. The boys teased him, the women called him a scarecrow, and everyone made fun of him, but everyone looked with admiration at the tall, handsome youth who handled the goods so cleverly and showed them off to the best advantage.

When Kalum-Bek saw that his plan answered and that Said attracted many more customers than he had been able to, he treated the young man much better, fed him well and saw that he had good clothes to show off his fine face and figure; but these attentions did not soften Said in the least and he made up his mind to escape on the first opportunity.

One day they had done an unusually good trade in the shop, so many things had been bought that the porters were all away carrying home the goods the customers had bought, but a lady entered the

shop, bought some goods and asked for a man to carry them home at once.

"In half an hour, I will send them with pleasure," said Kalum-Bek, "but just now all my men are out; if you cannot wait so long, perhaps you would prefer to engage an outside porter.

"A fine merchant you are," said the lady angrily, "to advise me to engage a strange man to carry home my purchases. He would doubtless make off with my goods and who would repay me then? No, according to the custom of the market, it is your duty to provide a man to carry home goods purchased, and I insist upon having one."

Said was to stand at the door of the shop and show off the wares.
(P. 298.)

"Certainly, certainly," said Kalum-Bek, "if you will only wait half an hour I can oblige you."

"This is a common shop indeed," replied the enraged lady, "not to provide sufficient porters. But there stands a great idle fellow, he shall carry home my parcel and I will give him a coin for his pains."

"Oh! no!" screamed Kalum-Bek, "I cannot spare my assistant, he is my signboard to attract folks in. He is not allowed to leave the door."

"Nonsense," replied the old woman, and without further parlance pushed her parcel into Said's arms. "You cannot sell very good wares if you need to lay traps to catch your customers."

"For goodness sake go, but be quick to return," said the merchant, "the old wretch will make her complaints heard all over the Bazaar."

Said followed the old lady, who walked a great deal quicker than one would have thought possible at her age. They reached a beautiful house, knocked, and the wide doors flew open and they ascended a flight of marble steps. As the old lady beckoned Said to follow her, he went into a magnificent apartment decorated in a superb style. The old lady seated herself in an exhausted condition upon a sofa and signed to the young man to put down his parcel, handed him a small silver coin and bade him depart.

He had reached the door when a silvery voice called him by name. He turned, astonished that anyone in that place should know his name, and to his surprise saw a beautiful lady, surrounded by numerous slaves and women servants, sitting upon the sofa where the old woman had been. Dumb with surprise he folded his arms and made a deep obeisance.

"Said, dear youth," said the lady, "although I am sorry for the misfortunes that have befallen you, still Bagdad is the place appointed by fate for your fortunes to change, should it happen that you left your father's

house before the time appointed. Said, have you still your little whistle?"

"Indeed I have," he cried joyfully as he drew forth the golden chain, "and are you the good fairy who gave it to me at my birth?"

"I was your dear mother's friend," answered the fairy, "and I will be yours as long as you remain worthy. Oh! how foolish was your father to disregard my instructions. You would have been saved much suffering."

"Well, it cannot be helped," said Said. "But dearest lady, could you not harness the North-East wind to your cloud carriage and carry me away in a few moments to my father's house in Balsora? I will promise to patiently await the remaining six months before I am twenty years of age."

The fairy smiled. "That is easier said than done," she said. "Unfortunately I am unable to do anything for you at present, not even rescue you from Kalum-Bek, who happens to be under the protection of your most powerful enemy."

"Then I have a bad fairy as well as a good one, eh?" said Said; "but if you can do nothing else you can surely help me with good advice. Shall I go to the Caliph and complain to him? He is a wise man and he will know how to protect me against Kalum-Bek."

"Yes, Harun is very wise, but unfortunately he is but human and trusts his Chamberlain implicitly, and with justice, too, for he has tried him and proved him to be trusted. But honest Messour in his turn trusts Kalum-Bek, and there he is wrong, for Kalum

is a bad man, although he is Messour's cousin. He has told Messour a number of lies about you and these lies have been repeated to the Caliph, so that if you went to them with your true story they would not believe you; you must wait for a fitting opportunity to go to Harun, for it is written in the stars that you are to become the object of his especial favour."

"Alas!" answered Said, "I suppose then I must submit for the present to be the servant of Kalum-Bek. But one favour you might be able to grant me. I have been brought up to the use of arms, and my greatest pleasure is to take part in tournaments where there is fighting with lance and sword. Every week the youths of this town meet together and engage in such a tournament, but only the best-born are allowed to compete, a shopman's assistant would certainly not be allowed to enter the lists. Could you manage to let me have a horse, a suit of clothes and weapons, and to alter my face so that I should not be recognised?"

"That is a wish such as does credit to a noble youth," replied the fairy. "Your mother's father was the bravest man in Syria and his spirit seems to have descended on you. Take note of this house. Every week you may come here and you will find awaiting you a horse, two armed servants, robes and weapons, also a wash for your face that will transform you completely. And now, Said, farewell! Persevere in your wise and virtuous conduct and you will find that in six months' time your whistle will sound when you blow it, and Zuleima's ear will not be deaf to it."

The young man parted from his protectress with

thanks, carefully noted the position of the house, and went back to the Bazaar.

He arrived at the right moment to rescue his master, Kalum-Bek. The shop was crowded with people, the boys were dancing round Kalum and taunting him, and the older people stood by and laughed. The merchant was in a furious rage. He stood with a shawl in one hand and a veil in the other. The uproar was caused by Said's absence, for scarcely had he left than Kalum took his stand at the door and began to cry his wares, but nobody would buy from the ugly old man.

Kalum had noticed two men walking up and down the Bazaar, evidently looking out for something. In reality they had come to buy presents for their wives and had been commanded by them to purchase only from the handsome young shopman.

At length Kalum called to them: "Here, my masters, you will find everything you require by me. Shawls and veils of the finest quality."

"That may be, my good man," they replied, "but it has become the fashion amongst the women to buy their goods from a certain handsome young man named Said, and we are looking out for him. If you can direct us to him we will come and buy from you another time."

"Allah is good," said Kalum, grinning in friendly fashion, "the prophet has led you to the right door. You wish to buy veils from the handsome young shopman, then step inside, this is his shop."

One of the men laughed at his assertion that he the ugly little creature, was the tall handsome shopman

but the other man, who believed he was being made fun of, lost his temper and rated him in no measured terms. Kalum was beside himself and called his neighbours to testify that his shop was the one known as the shop of the handsome young assistant. But the neighbours, who were jealous of the trade he drove, pretended to know nothing about the matter and the two men struck the "old liar," as they called him. Kalum protected himself more by shrieking and yelling than by using his fists and so he attracted a crowd to his shop. Everyone in the town knew him to be an avaricious old cheat and so no one interfered, for they thought he deserved all he was getting. One of the men had seized him by the beard and was about to further ill-treat him when he was seized and flung violently to the ground, so that his turban and both his shoes flew off.

The crowd, who would have enjoyed seeing Kalum ill-used, began to murmur, the companion of the man who had been knocked down advanced to his assistance, but when he saw himself confronted by a tall, handsome young fellow he thought it better not to strike him. Kalum no sooner spied his assistant than he began calling out, "There he is, there is the handsome young shopman called Said." The man who had been knocked down got up again and limped away rather ashamed of himself, without having bought either shawl or veil.

"Oh! prince of shop-assistants," cried Kalum-Bek, "you did indeed arrive at the very moment you were wanted. How can I reward you for the service you have done me?"

Said had merely acted on the spur of the moment, and now that the affair was over he half regretted having interfered on the old man's behalf, for he well knew he deserved a good punishment. However, he thought he might make use of the old fellow's offer of a reward. So he asked to be given one evening a week for his own amusement, either to take a walk or to spend it as he wished, and Kalum-Bek, who knew his assistant had too much good sense to attempt to escape without money, readily granted him the favour.

The man was seized and flung violently to the ground. (P. 304)

The following Wednesday was the day upon which the young men of high rank met to hold their tournament, and so Said asked if he could have this evening for himself. Kalum being willing, the young man went straight off to the street in which the fairy lived and knocked at the door, which immediately flew open. The servants appeared to be prepared to receive him, for, without asking his business, they took him upstairs to a fine apartment where they

first gave him magic water to wash in. Having laved his face he looked at himself in a mirror and found that his face was tanned as by the sun and that he had a fine black beard, so that he looked at least ten years older than he had done previously.

After that they led him into another room where a superb suit of clothes awaited him which might not have disgraced the Caliph himself. In addition to a turban of the finest materials, having a heron's plume fastened with a diamond clasp, there was a dress of shimmering red silk embroidered with silver flowers, a corselet of silver chain-work, so finely made that it accommodated itself to every movement of his body, and was yet so strong that neither lance nor sword could pierce it. A Damascus sword with richly-jewelled scabbard and hilt completed his warlike attire.

When he was completely equipped and about to leave the house, one of the servants gave him a silk handkerchief and told him that the mistress of the house had sent it to him, so that when he wished to become his usual self again he had but to wipe his face with it and the tan colour and beard would disappear.

In the courtyard of the house three beautiful horses were standing. Said mounted the finest and his servants the other two, and he then rode joyously forth to the tournament.

All eyes were attracted by the splendour of his dress and weapons and a murmur of surprise went round the ring as he entered it.

It was indeed a glittering assembly of all the

noblest and bravest young men in Bagdad, even the brothers of the Caliph taking part in the fray. As Said entered, the son of the Grand Vizier and some of his friends approached him and asked his name and birthplace.

Said replied that his name was Almansor and that he came from Cairo, and was travelling about. Having heard rumours of the valour and skill of the young nobles of Bagdad, he had wished to witness their feats and perhaps take part in them.

A young man, approving of Said's bold appearance, ordered a lance to be given to him and bade him choose his parties, for the whole Company had divided itself into two parties, so that they might encounter each other in a mass and then singly.

But if Said's appearance had attracted the general attention his feats of arms did so still more. His horse was faster than a bird, and his sword flashed like lightning.

He threw his lance at the target as though it had been an arrow from the bow of an expect archer. At the conclusion of the tournament he had beaten all his opponents, and the Caliph's brother and the Grand Vizier's son, who had been on his side, begged him to try a bout with them. He succeeded in vanquishing the Caliph's brother, but the contest with the Grand Vizier's son remained undecided, and it was thought better to settle it at the next meeting.

The day after the tournament everyone in Bagdad was speaking of the handsome and brave stranger. Even those who had been beaten by him were loud

in their praise of him, and Said heard folks discussing him as he stood at the door of the shop and regretting that no one knew where he lived.

When the time for the next tournament came he found in the fairy's house a still more beautiful suit of clothes and more costly weapons. Half Bagdad had assembled to witness the fray and the Caliph himself looked down upon it from a balcony. He too was astounded at Almansor's dexterity, and at the end of the day he hung a gold medal and chain around his neck as a mark of his admiration.

But this second and still more brilliant victory aroused the jealousy of some of the young people: they did not like to feel that a stranger should come and triumph over the flower of their young nobility, and they determined amongst themselves that five or six of them would attack him at once, as if by chance.

Said did not fail to notice the angry glances of the young men, and speedily noted that with the exception of the Caliph's brother and the Grand Vizier's son not one of them had any friendly inclination towards him. Strange to say, the young man who seemed to be the most set against him was the young man he had knocked down in Kalum's shop, and he looked at him so suspiciously that Said was half afraid he had recognised him by his height or his voice. Even the friendship of the Caliph's brother and the Grand Vizier's son was somewhat embarrassing, for they questioned him closely as to where he was to be found.

But the plan the envious young men made against him was frustrated, for in addition to his own foresight

and bravery the Caliph's brother and the Grand Vizier's son came to his assistance as soon as they saw him surrounded by half a dozen opponents, all of whom were trying to unhorse him. Together they scattered the whole troop and the Caliph's brother threatened to expel the treacherous young men from the lists.

Said approached them quietly. (P. 309)

For over four months Said continued thus to prove his bravery to the astonishment of all Bagdad, when one night as he was on his way home from the place of combat he heard some voices which sounded familiar. Four men were in front of him, walking slowly and apparently discussing something of great moment.

Said approached them quietly and then discovered that they were speaking in the dialect spoken by Selim's robber horde, and he suspected that they were probably planning a robbery.

His first impulse was to make off as fast as he could, but on consideration he decided to listen to what they were saying in the hope of preventing some mischief.

"The porter distinctly said the street on the right-hand side of the Bazaar," said one; "he will pass down it to-night with the Grand Vizier."

"Good," replied the other, "I am not afraid of the Grand Vizier, he is old and no particular hero; but the Caliph will show fight, besides I do not trust him. There will be a dozen or so bodyguards following him, I'll be bound."

"Not one soul," answered a third. "Whenever he has been seen at night it was always either with the Vizier or the Chamberlain alone. To-night he must be ours; but he is not to be harmed."

"I think the best we can do is to throw a lassoo over his head. He must not be killed, for we should not get much of a ransom for his corpse, if we had anything at all."

"Then one hour before midnight!" they all said together, and parted, each in a different direction.

Said was not a little alarmed and at first started off to warn the Caliph, but remembering what the fairy had said about Kalum-Bek having poisoned his mind against him he determined to rely upon his own good sword to assist him.

So instead of returning to Kalum-Bek's house he sat down upon the steps of a mosque to await the hour before midnight. Shortly before the time he went and hid himself in the porch of a house in the street the robbers had mentioned.

Presently two men came strolling down the street whom he took at first to be the Caliph and his Vizier; but when they came opposite to him they clapped

their hands softly and two others came hurrying to join them. They whispered awhile and parted, three hiding themselves in another porch, not far from Said, and one walking up and down the road. The night was very dark, but quiet, and so Said had to trust to his sharp ears alone.

The fourth, seeing what had happened, fled. (P. 312.)

Half an hour passed before he heard steps coming from the direction of the Bazaar. The robber must have heard them also, for he slunk past Said towards the Bazaar. The steps came nearer and Said could just recognise some dark forms, when the robber clapped his hands softly and the same moment the three in the background darted forward. Those attacked must have been armed, for he could hear the clash of swords, so, unsheathing his own Damascus steel, he threw himself into the thick of the fray, shouting: "Down with the enemies of the noble Harun." He felled one robber at the first stroke and then attacked two others who were about to disarm

a man whom they had caught in a noose. He hewed at the cord blindly, to sever it, but in so doing struck one of the robbers so furiously across the arm that he cut his hand off. But now the fourth robber, who had been fighting another man, turned towards Said, who was still engaged with the third, but the man whose cords had been cut no sooner felt himself free than he drew his dagger and struck one of the robbers in the side. The fourth, seeing what had happened, threw away his sword and fled.

Said was not left long in doubt as to whom he had saved, for the taller of the two men approached him and said: "I do not know which is the more incomprehensible, the attack on my life or my freedom, or the surprising manner in which you came to my assistance. How did you know who I was, and did you know of these men's intentions?" "Ruler of the Faithful," answered Said, "for I do not doubt that you are he, this evening I chanced to walk behind four men, who were speaking a strange dialect that I once learnt. They spoke of taking you prisoner and of killing your Vizier. As it was too late to come and warn you, I determined to hide myself near the spot they had mentioned for the attack to take place, and to come to your assistance."

"I thank you heartily," said Harun, "but I am not anxious to remain here any longer than necessary and so I give you this ring; bring it to the palace to-morrow and I will think how best I can reward you. Come, Vizier, we had best be going."

As he spoke he placed a ring on the young man's

finger, and then attempted to draw the Vizier away, but the latter begged him to excuse him a moment and, turning to the astonished youth, he handed him a heavy purse. "Young man," said he, "my master, the Caliph, can raise you to any height he pleases, even to be my successor; I myself can do little, but the little I can do is better done to-day. Therefore take this purse and remember that I still count myself your debtor."

Quite intoxicated with happiness Said hurried away home. Here, however, he met with a very bad reception, for Kalum-Bek was very angry with him for being so late. He had been afraid lest he had lost his handsome sign post, and so he raged and scolded like a madman. But Said, who had given a glance into his purse and seen that it was full of pieces of gold, thought to himself that now he had sufficient money to take him home, even without the assistance of the Caliph, which he guessed would take no mean form, and so he gave back Kalum-Bek word for word and told him plainly that he would remain with him no longer.

"You rascally vagabond," said Kalum-Bek, "where will you obtain a dinner or a night's lodging if I withdraw my protection from you?" "That is no concern of yours," answered Said defiantly. "Good-bye to you, for you will see me no more."

So saying, he ran off, whilst Kalum-Bek stared after him, dumb with surprise. The next morning, when he had had time to consider matters, he sent his porters out to spy out news of his assistant, and after some time one of them returned with the news that he had seen Said come out of a mosque and

enter a caravanserai. He was wearing a handsome dress, a dagger and sword and a magnificent turban.

When Kalum-Bek heard this he said: "He must have robbed me and dressed himself up on my money. Oh! what an unfortunate man I am."

He hastened to the chief of the police, and as it was known that he was a relative of Messour, the Chamberlain, he had no difficulty in getting an order for Said's arrest.

Said was calmly sitting outside a caravanserai conversing with a merchant whom he had met there, about the journey to Balsora, his native town, when suddenly several men fell upon him and bound his hands behind him, in spite of his resistance.

He asked by what right they used such violence and they replied that it was in the name of the law and by the instigation of his master, Kalum-Bek. And Kalum-Bek himself, appearing at that moment, mocked and reviled Said and, plunging his hand into the young man's pocket, drew forth, to the surprise of the surrounding people, a large purse full of gold.

"Do you see what he has stolen from me?" he yelled in triumph. And the bystanders looked at Said in disgust. "So young, so handsome, and yet so wicked," they said. "To prison with him that he may be flogged."

So they dragged him away to prison, followed by a crowd of people calling out, "Do you see the handsome shop-assistant from the Bazaar? He robbed his master of two hundred gold pieces and then ran away."

Brought before the chief of the police, Said would have defended himself; but the officer would

not allow him to speak and only listened to Kalum-Bek, who declared that the money and purse found upon Said belonged to him. The judge therefore ordered the money to be given to Kalum-Bek, but it did not gain him possession of the handsome young assistant, who was worth at least a thousand gold pieces to him.

"In accordance with the law passed by my illustrious master, the Caliph, a few days ago," said the judge, "every thief who steals over a hundred gold pieces is to be sent to perpetual banishment on a desert island. This thief has fallen into my hands exactly at the right time, for he completes the number of twenty such fellows. To-morrow they will be packed on board a ship and sent to sea."

Said was in despair; he begged the officer to listen to him and to allow him to speak one word to the Caliph, but he found no mercy. Kalum-Bek, who now regretted the false accusation, also spoke in his favour, but the judge answered: "You have your money and you can be content, go home and keep quiet, otherwise I shall fine you ten gold pieces for every word you utter in argument." Kalum was silent then, the judge motioned with his hand, and the unhappy Said was led away.

He was taken to a dark, damp prison, where nineteen other unfortunate creatures were lying about on some mouldy straw. They received their new companion with rude laughter and horrible expressions of anger against the judge and the Caliph.

Terrible as it seemed to him to be doomed to be cast upon a desert island, yet he comforted himself

with the thought of leaving his loathsome prison, thinking it could not be so bad when once they had put to sea. But he was deceived, for the twenty criminals were cast down into the hold, which was pitch dark, very close, and so low that it was impossible to stand upright.

The anchor was weighed and Said wept bitter tears as the ship receded from his native land. Once a day the prisoners received a little bread and fruit and a drink of water. The atmosphere was so close and unhealthy that almost every other day one of the prisoners was found dead, but Said's youth and splendid health saved him.

They had been at sea about a fortnight when there was an unaccustomed running to and fro upon deck, and the roaring of the waves and pitching of the vessel having increased, Said guessed that there was a storm raging. As the rocking of the vessel grew worse and worse, shrieks and lamentations resounded from below, and when the prisoners found that the hold was filling with water they knocked at the trap-door, and as no one answered they threw themselves against it and their united strength burst it open. As they came upon deck they found that the crew had deserted them and taken to the boats. Most of the prisoners were in despair, for the violence of the storm seemed, if anything, to increase. They took a last meal of the provisions they found on the ship, when suddenly the ship, which had been stuck fast upon a rock, was washed off by an enormous wave and sank.

Said had managed to secure a floating spar, and

THE ADVENTURES OF SAID.

"It had turned into an enormous dolphin."

by using his feet as oars he had kept himself afloat for some time, when suddenly the little magic whistle on the golden chain slipped from his vest and he thought he would try it once more. This time it gave forth a clear silvery tone, and in a moment the storm had subsided as though oil had been poured upon the waves. He was about to gaze around him to see if land were in sight, when he noticed a peculiar movement in the spar upon which he sat astride, and in some alarm he saw that it had turned into an enormous dolphin and was carrying him along as swiftly as an arrow. He guessed he had his good fairy to thank for this and called out his thanks to her.

His extraordinary steed went at such speed that before evening fell he sighted land and became aware that he was in a wide river. As they were going against the stream the pace slowed down a little. By this time Said was very hungry, so he blew his whistle and wished for a meal. Immediately the huge fish stopped, a table rose up from the water, as dry as though it had been a week in the broad sunshine; it was set out with the most delicious food and drink imaginable, and Said set to and made a hearty meal, for since his imprisonment his food had been scanty and unappetising. When he had at length satisfied his hunger he uttered his thanks and the table disappeared, he dug his heels into the dolphin's sides and it began to swim on again.

As the sun began to sink Said saw a town in the distance, the towers of which seemed to him to resemble those of Bagdad. He had no great wish to

land in Bagdad, but his faith in the good fairy was so strong that he was sure she would not allow him to fall into the hands of the wicked Kalum-Bek.

About a mile distant from the town Said noticed a fine country mansion, and to his surprise the dolphin began to steer towards it.

Upon the roof of the house were several well-dressed men, and on the shore were a number of servants, all of whom were staring at him in astonishment. A flight of marble steps led from the water to the mansion, and here the dolphin stopped, and Said had scarcely set foot upon the steps when the fish disappeared.

At once some servants hurried towards him and begged him, in their master's name, to go up to him after he had changed his wet clothing.

They brought a suit of clothes to him and, having dressed hastily, he followed the servants to the roof, where he found three men, the tallest and handsomest of whom came towards him with a friendly smile.

"Who are you, wonderful stranger," he asked, "who can tame the fishes of the sea so that you can guide them to the right or left as a good horseman guides his charger? Are you a magician or a man like ourselves?"

"Sir," replied Said, "I have been a most unfortunate man for some time past, but if you will give me permission I will tell you all about it." And he commenced to tell his story from the moment he left his father's house until the time of his wonderful escape.

He was interrupted frequently by exclamations of astonishment, but as he concluded the master of

the house said: "I believe you implicitly, Said, but you tell us that you won a gold chain at the tournament and that the Caliph gave you his ring; can you produce these?"

"I carry them next my heart," said the youth, "and would only part with them with my life, for I consider the saving of the Caliph's life to have been the noblest action I could have performed." With that he handed the chain and ring to the men.

"By the beard of the prophet, it is my ring," cried the tall handsome man. "Grand Vizier, come and let us embrace our deliverer."

It seemed to Said that he must be dreaming when the two embraced him, and immediately he flung himself upon his face and said, "Pardon me, Ruler of the Faithful, for having spoken as I did before you, for I perceive now that you are none other than Harun Al-Raschid, the Great Caliph of Bagdad."

"I am your friend," answered Harun, "and from this time your troubles are all over. Come with me to Bagdad and you shall be one of my most trusted officials, for you proved your metal the night you saved my life."

Said thanked him and said how gladly he would remain with him always if only he would allow him first to go and visit his father, who must be in great sorrow and trouble on his account. The Caliph assented readily to this and so they mounted their horses and rode into Bagdad, which they reached just as the sun was setting.

The Caliph ordered a magnificent suite of apartments

to be prepared for Said, and besides this promised to build him a house of his own.

The Caliph's brother and the Grand Vizier's son, Said's old companions in arms, hastened to come to him as soon as they heard what had occurred. They embraced the gallant defender of their ruler and begged him to be their friend. But they were speechless with astonishment when he handed the gold chain to them and said: "I have been your friend for a long time, do you not remember this chain?

They had only known him with a beard and a dark brown complexion, and when he told them why he had disguised himself, and when he had proved to them by a bout of fencing that he really was Almansor, they embraced him joyfully and said they reckoned themselves fortunate in having such a friend.

The following day, as Said was sitting with the Caliph and the Grand Vizier, the Chamberlain Messour entered and said, "Ruler of the Faithful, I wish to ask a favour."

"Tell me first what it is!" answered the Caliph.

"Without stands my cousin, Kalum-Bek, a well-known merchant of the Bazaar. He has a curious affair with a man from Balsora, whose son was Kalum's servant, but who robbed him and ran off, no one knows whither. And now the father demands his son from Kalum, who cannot produce him. And Kalum begs that you should, in virtue of your wisdom and great learning, decide between him and the man from Balsora."

"I will judge between them," replied Harun. "Let

your cousin and his adversary appear in the Hall of Justice in half an hour's time."

When Messour had thanked the Caliph and withdrawn, Harun said: "It is your father, Said, and as I fortunately know the whole truth of the case I will give judgment like Solomon. You shall conceal yourself behind the curtains of my throne until I call you, and you, Grand Vizier, send at once for the wicked and all too hasty police officer. I shall need him as a witness. "Both did as they were requested. Said's heart beat quickly when he saw his father's pale and careworn face and noticed the tottering, steps with which he entered the Justice Hall but Kalum-Bek's confident smile, as he whispered to his cousin the Chamberlain, enraged him so that he could scarcely restrain himself from rushing out and giving him a good beating, for he owed the greater number of his sufferings to this wicked man. The Hall was crowded with people who

A crier was going through the Bazaar. (P. 322.)

wished to hear the Caliph pronounce justice, and as soon as the ruler of Bagdad had taken his seat on the throne the Grand Vizier commanded silence and then asked who it was that appeared as complainant.

Kalum-Bek stepped forward with a bold look on his face and said: "Some days ago a crier was going through the Bazaar offering a purse of gold for news of Said of Balsora. As this Said had been in my employ I said, 'Here, friend, I can earn your purse of gold.' Then this man, who is so hostile towards me now, came to me in a friendly fashion and asked what I knew. I replied, 'You are Benezar his father?' and as he joyfully agreed, I went on to tell him how I had found Said in the desert, and saved him and taken care of him and brought him to Bagdad. In the joy of his heart he gave me the purse of gold, but the foolish man, when I went on to tell him how his son had served me and how he had run off with my money, would not believe me and demanded both his money and his son; neither could I give him, for the money belonged to me in payment of the news I had given him, and his worthless son I cannot give him back."

Next Benezar spoke, defending his son and saying that he was incapable of stealing, being of a noble and virtuous mind, and he begged the Caliph to enquire deeply into the matter. "I hope you did your duty and gave information of the theft, Kalum-Bek?" said the Caliph. "Certainly!" he replied, smiling, "I took him before the magistrate."

"Let the magistrate be called," said the Caliph, and to everyone's surprise he appeared immediately. The Caliph asked him if he remembered the affair, and he assured him he did. "Did you examine the young man and did he acknowledge the theft?" asked Harun.

"No, he was most obstinate and would confess to none but you!" replied the magistrate.

"But I do not remember having seen him," said the Caliph.

"No, indeed," answered the magistrate. "I might take up too much of your time if I sent you every vagabond who wishes to speak with you."

"You know that my ear is open to all," answered Harun. "But perhaps the proofs of the theft were so clear that you did not think it necessary to bring him to me. You had doubtless witnesses, Kalum, to prove that the money really was yours?"

"Witnesses?" he asked, turning pale, "no I had no witness, for you know, Ruler of the Faithful, that one piece of gold is exactly like another, so how could I bring witnesses to prove that these actual pieces were missing from my money chest?"

"Then how did you know that that particular sum of money belonged to you?" asked the Caliph.

"On account of the purse they were in," said Kalum.

"Have you got the purse here?" he enquired further.

"Here it is," said the merchant, and taking out a purse he handed it to the Grand Vizier that he might give it to the Caliph.

But the Vizier cried out in feigned astonishment, "By the beard of the Prophet! The purse is yours? You dog! The purse belonged to me and I gave it filled with a hundred gold pieces to a brave young man who rescued me from a great danger."

"Can you swear to that?" asked the Caliph.

"I am perfectly certain," replied the Vizier, "my daughter worked it for me."

"Ah, you have received false information, magistrate," said the Caliph. "Why did you believe the purse belonged to Kalum?"

"He swore it was his," said the magistrate anxiously. "And so you swore falsely?" thundered the Caliph to the merchant, who stood pale and trembling before him.

"Allah! Allah!" cried he. "Of course I do not wish to say anything against the Grand Vizier, but the purse is really mine and the good-for-nothing Said stole it. I would give a thousand gold pieces if he were here on the spot."

"What did you do with this Said then?" asked the Caliph. "Where must we send to bring him here."

"I sent him to a desert island," said the magistrate.

"Oh! Said, my son, my son!" cried the unhappy father.

"Then he confessed his crime?" asked the Caliph.

The magistrate turned pale, and said unsteadily, "If I remember rightly he did in the end."

"Then you are not quite certain?" the Caliph went on in severe tones. "Very well, then we will ask him himself. Said, stand forth, and you, Kalum-Bek,

pay me at once a thousand gold pieces because he is here on the spot."

Kalum and the magistrate thought it must be a ghost. They fell to their knees crying, "Mercy, mercy." Benezar was half fainting with joy and fell into the arms of his lost son.

Benezar fell into the arms of his lost son.
(P. 325.)

Then in firm, hard tones the Caliph asked: "Magistrate, here is Said, now will you affirm that he confessed his crime?"

"No, no," howled the magistrate, "I only listened to Kalum's evidence, because he is looked upon as a respectable man."

"Did I appoint you judge that you should only listen to rich people?" cried Harun with contempt and anger. "I will banish you to a desert island for ten years, so that you may have time to think on justice. And you, miserable man, who restored the dying, not for the sake of saving him, but to make him your slave, you shall pay the thousand gold pieces."

Kalum rejoiced to be let off so cheaply and was about to thank the Caliph, when he went on: "For swearing falsely about the money you will receive a hundred strokes on the soles of your feet. Further,

it is for Said to decide whether he shall take the whole of your shop and possessions with you as his slave, or whether he will be satisfied with ten pieces of gold for every day he served you."

"Let the miserable old wretch go," cried the youth, "I wish for nothing that was his."

"No," replied Harun. "I intend you to be compensated. I will choose for you the ten pieces of gold for every day, and you must reckon how many days you were in his clutches. And now away with the miserable creatures!"

When they had been taken away the Caliph led Benezar and Said into another room; there he told the father of the brave manner in which his son had saved his life, his recital being interrupted by the yells of Kalum, whose hundred gold pieces were being counted out on the soles of his feet.

The Caliph invited Benezar, together with Said, to live with him in Bagdad. He agreed, but made one journey home in order that he might fetch his large fortune. Said took up his residence at once in the palace built for him by the grateful Caliph, and lived there like a prince. The Caliph's brother and the Grand Vizier's son were his constant companions, and it became a password in Bagdad: "I wish I were as good and happy as Said, the son of Benezar."

THE CAVERN OF STEENFOLL.

A SCOTTISH LEGEND.

One big wave washed up a ball of pure gold. (P. 329)

MANY years ago two fishermen lived happily together upon one of the rocky islands off the Scottish coast. They were both unmarried and had no near relations, and their united efforts, although they were of very different dispositions, sufficed to provide them with all they needed. They were much of an age, but in appearance and character they resembled each other about as much as an eagle resembles a calf.

Caspar Stump was a short fat man with a broad fat face like a full moon, and good-tempered twinkling eyes, which seemed as though they were strangers to trouble and care.

Not only was he very fat, he was also rather lazy, and so the household duties fell to his share; he had to cook and bake, make the nets to catch fish and to sell in the market, and help to cultivate their little field.

His companion was the direct opposite, tall and thin, with bold features, a hooked nose like a hawk's, and sharp eyes; he was the hardest-working and most intrepid of fishermen, the most venturesome climber after bird's eggs, which were found in the rocky crevices of the cliffs, and the most industrious field labourer on the island, as well as being one of the keenest to drive a bargain in the market of Kirkwall. But as his wares were good and he always traded honestly, everyone liked to deal with him, and Will Hawk, as his neighbours nicknamed him, in spite of his fondness for money, always shared his profits willingly with Caspar Stump, so that the two of them not only made a very good living, but were able to put by something for a rainy day.

But Will Hawk was not content with that, he wanted to be *rich, very rich,* and as he knew that sheer hard work, such as his, rarely brought in extraordinary wealth, he began to think that he must try and find out some other means of making money, and taking it for granted that he would succeed, he discussed the matter freely with Caspar Stump. Caspar, who accepted everything that Will said as Gospel truth, told his neighbours of the fortune his companion was about to make, and so a rumour went abroad that Will Hawk had sold his soul to the evil one.

At first Will laughed at these reports, but gradually he began to wish that some spirit would appear and tell him where he might discover buried treasure, and he ceased to contradict the neighbours when they joked him about it. It is true he still continued to carry on his ordinary occupation, but with less zeal, and often wasted the time when he should have been fishing in idle wanderings after adventures which he hoped would make him rich. Unfortunately for him as he was one day standing on the sea-shore gazing out to sea, as though he expected the waves rolling in to bring a fortune to his feet, one big wave washed up a quantity of shingle and lose sea-weed, and amongst the sea-weed a yellow ball, a ball of pure gold.

Will stood as though enchanted; his hopes of untold wealth had not been empty dreams, the sea had given him gold, pure shining gold, which the action of the sea had worn down, probably from a large bar, to a ball the size of a bullet.

It seemed quite clear to him now that at some time a richly-laden vessel must have gone to pieces on the rocks, and that it was for him to find and raise the buried treasures, hidden beneath the waves. From this time he devoted all his energies to the task, carefully hiding his find from all, even from his friend. He neglected everything else and spent days and nights on the sea-shore, not casting out fishing nets, but using a drag wich he had made on purpose to haul in treasure.

His only reward was poverty, for he had ceased to make money himself and Caspar's sleepy efforts did not bring in enough to feed the two of them. In

searching for riches all the little fortune they possessed was lost. But just as easy-going Caspar had once allowed Will Hawk to provide the money for his maintenance, so he now accepted poverty without complaint, and it was this silent endurance on the part of his friend that spurred Will on to further efforts to amass wealth.

But what made him still more intent on continuing the search was that, whenever he lay down to sleep, it seemed to him that someone whispered a word in his ear. It was always the same, but he never could remember it when he was awake. It is true that there seemed no connection between this circumstance and his present quest, but on a mind like Will's everything seemed to make an impression, and even this mysterious whispering strengthened him in the belief that he was destined for a great piece of good fortune and that he would one day find a large heap of gold.

One day he was surprised by a storm whilst on the shore where he had found the ball of gold, and the violence of it caused him to take shelter in a neighbouring cave. This cave, which the people called the Cavern of Steenfoll, consisted of a long subterranean passage with two openings to the sea, which afforded the waves free passage to and fro, and there they roared and foamed as they rushed along it.

The cave was only accessible in one spot from the land, and that through a crevice in the roof, but it was seldom that any but reckless boys ventured there, for, in addition to the dangers of the place it was supposed to be haunted.

With great difficulty Will succeeded in letting himself down and took his seat upon a jutting rock about twelve feet from the surface. Here, with the waves roaring beneath his feet and the storm raging above his head, he fell into his usual way of thinking about the sunken ship and what sort of a vessel it could have been, for, in spite of having questioned all the oldest inhabitants on the island, he had been unable to obtain any news of a wreck in that place.

Will heard a voice from the depths. (P. 331.)

How long he had sat there he did not know himself, but when he at length awoke from his dreams he found that the storm had passed over, and he was just about to climb out of the cave when he heard a voice from the depths which pronounced the word "Carmil-han" quite distinctly.

"Why," cried he, "that is the word I have heard so often in my dreams. What can it mean?"

Terrified, he began to climb quickly upwards when, just as he was creeping out of the crevice, he heard once more, "Carmilhan," softly whispered from the depths. Then he fled like a frightened deer to his home.

Will was, however, no coward, he had merely been taken unawares; besides that, his craze for gold was too strong in him for the appearance of danger

to frighten him from the path he had entered upon. One moonlight night as he was using his drag in his search for treasures near the Cavern of Steenfoll, it caught fast in something. He pulled with all his strength, but could not move it. In the meantime the wind had risen, dark clouds drifted across the sky, the boat rocked violently and threatened to overturn, but Will would not give in, he tugged and pulled until at length the resistance ceased, and as he felt no weight he thought the cords of the net must have broken. But just as the clouds were about to cover the moon a round black mass rose to the surface and once more he heard the word "Carmilhan" whispered. He would have seized it, but as he was about to stretch out his arm it disappeared in the darkness of the night and the storm broke, forcing him to seek shelter beneath the rocks. Here he fell asleep from sheer exhaustion, but only to endure the same restless misery that he endured by day, owing to his everlasting longing for wealth.

The first rays of the rising sun illumined the surface of the water when Will awoke. He was about to set out upon his accustomed work when he saw something approaching him from a distance; he recognised it to be a boat with a man in it, but what aroused his curiosity was that the boat was moving along without the assistance of either sails or rudder and the bows were turned to the shore.

The boat came nearer and nearer and stopped at length beside Will's boat, and Will could see that the person in it was a little wizened old man, dressed

THE CAVERN OF STEENFOLL

"I came to look for the Carmilhan," he said

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in yellow linen with a red pointed night-cap on his head, his eyes were closed and he looked as though he were dead. Will called to him several times without obtaining an answer, and was about to fasten a cord to the boat in order to tow it along when the man opened his eyes and writhed about in a fashion that filled even the hardy fisherman with horror.

"Where am I?" he asked with a deep sigh, speaking in Dutch, and Will, who had learnt a few words of that language from the Dutch herring fishers, told him the name of the island, and asked him who he was and what had brought him there.

"I came to look for the Carmilhan?" he said.

"What *is* the Carmilhan?" cried the fisherman eagerly.

"The Carmilhan does not exist any longer," the man said, "but it was once a fine ship, heavily laden with gold."

"When was it wrecked, and where?"

"It happened more than a hundred years ago, I am not quite certain where. I have come to find the place and to fish up the lost gold; if you will help me we will divide whatever we find."

"I agree with all my heart, but what must I do?" asked Will.

"What you have to do requires courage; you must go to the wildest and most deserted portion of the island at midnight, take a cow with you, kill it, and get some one to wind you up in its skin. Your companion must then lay you down on the ground and leave you, and before the clock strikes one o'clock you will know where the treasures of the Carmilhan lie."

"But that was how old Engrol was lost, soul and body," cried Will in terror; "you are without doubt the evil one and I will have nothing to do with you," and he rowed hastily away.

The little man ground his teeth with rage and abused him roundly, but the fisherman bent to his oars and was soon out of hearing, and after he had turned and rounded a rock he was out of sight also. But the knowledge that the evil spirit had endeavoured to make use of his avarice in order to lure him into his toils with gold did not cure the infatuated fisherman; on the contrary he intended to make use of the information he had obtained from the little man, without getting into his clutches, and so he continued to fish all around that barren coast for gold, neglecting the wealth of fish he might have obtained in other parts of the sea, in the same way that he neglected all his other work, so that day by day he and his companion sank into deeper poverty, until at length they wanted for the necessities of life.

But although this state of things was entirely owing to Will Hawk's obstinacy and greed and that the support of both of them fell to Caspar Stump alone, the latter never made him the slightest reproach, but showed him the same deference, the same confidence in his better judgment as in the days when all his undertakings were successful. This increased Will's troubles considerably, but drove him still more to seek for money, because he hoped to repay his friend for his present deprivations.

The whispered word "Carmilhan" resounded ever

in his slumbers. In short, want, disappointed expectations and avarice at length drove him mad, so that he decided to do what the little man had advised, although he knew from hearsay that he was selling himself to the powers of darkness.

All Caspar's representations were in vain. Will became more violent the more he was besought to give up his intentions. The good-natured, weak-minded fellow at last gave in and consented to assist him in carrying out his plans.

Both their hearts were filled with grief as they led out a beautiful cow, the last of their possessions. They had brought her up from a calf and had forborne to sell her because they could not bear to trust her in strange hands. But the evil spirit that had taken possession of William's mind stifled all better feeling in him, and Caspar could resist him in nothing.

It was September and the long nights of the Scottish winter had began and the dark clouds were racing along before the rough wind and seemed to lose themselves in the waters of the Clyde, deep shadows filled the mountain clefts, and the damp turfy marshes and the sullen streams looked dark and forbidding. Will Hawk went in advance and Caspar followed, shuddering at his own audacity. Tears filled his dim eyes as often as he looked at the poor cow which went so trustfully to meet its death at the hand that had hitherto tended it. They reached at length the boggy pass, overgrown with moss and heather and strewn with large stones, and surrounded by a wild chain of mountains that lost themselves in mist and were

seldom crossed by the foot of man. Over the boggy ground they went until they reached a great stone in the centre, from which a frightened eagle soared screaming.

The poor cow lowed mournfully as though she recognised the horror of the place and the fate that awaited her. Caspar turned away to hide his fast-flowing tears. He looked down the rocky way they had come up and from whence one could hear the moaning of the sea, and then looked up towards the mountain tops, hidden by a black cloud from which a dull murmuring came. When he again looked at Will he had already bound the poor cow to the stone and stood with axe raised ready to strike.

This was too much for poor Caspar. Wringing his hands, he fell upon his knees and entreated Will to desist from tempting Providence and to spare the life of the poor animal.

"Be it as you will," replied the infatuated man; "but if you have your way you may as well kill me instead of the cow, for otherwise I shall surely die of hunger.

It was in vain for Caspar to reason with him and to protest that in future he would work hard in order to provide a living for both of them, Will would not listen; he threw away the axe, but seizing a knife declared that as Caspar preferred the cow to him he would put an end to his wretched life.

Poor Caspar seized his hand and, snatching the knife, threw it away, then taking the axe he struck the cow such a tremendous blow that it fell dead at its master's feet.

Caspar, assisted by Will, then hurriedly removed the hide, and Will allowed his friend to envelope him in it, although he seemed suddenly to have been stricken with terror at what he was doing.

The thunderstorm had increased in violence, and by the time Will was firmly fastened into the cow's hide it was so dark that the two friends could no longer see each other and bade each other farewell in total darkness.

Over the boggy ground they went.
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Left to himself Will endured an agony of fear and suspense; at length he would gladly have disentangled himself from the hide and rushed after Caspar, but he had been too firmly tied up to be able to free himself.

The storm continued to increase in fury until at length the waters rose and almost covered him and he began to think that he would be drowned, when a sort of waterspout arose and, catching him up, dashed him to the foot of the rocks with so much force that he became unconscious.

When he regained his senses he felt bruised and weak. He could hear a faint sound of singing, which at first he took to be merely the sighing and moaning

of the waves, but as it grew louder he began to recognise the tune as a hymn which he had heard the fishermen singing on board a Dutch herring smack.

Nearer and nearer came the sound of the music, and presently to his surprise he saw a procession of human figures approaching him. Grief and fear were depicted on their countenances, and their clothes were all dripping with water.

As they came close up to him the singing ceased; the procession was led by several musicians, then came a number of sailors, and behind them walked a big fat man dressed in quaint, old-fashioned garments, which were richly embroidered with gold threads. He had a sword by his side and in his hand he carried a long thick Spanish cane with a gold knob.

A negro boy walked beside him carrying the long pipe from which his master drew a whiff from time to time. A number of other richly-dressed men accompanied him, all of them carrying pipes, though not such handsome ones as that of the stout man. Behind these came a number of women, all handsomely attired in old-fashioned garments, some of them carried little children in their arms, and some led children by the hand.

A crowd of Dutch sailors closed the procession, each of them having a quid of tobacco in his mouth and a pipe between his teeth, which he smoked in gloomy silence. As the whole assembly began to close round Will, the smoke from their pipes grew denser and denser and he felt as though he were about to be smothered.

He was by nature a courageous man, but a nameless terror now seemed to seize him, which was increased by the sight of the little yellow man, who had suddenly appeared and was seated close beside him.

He looked exactly as he had done before, except

A negro boy walked beside him, carrying the long pipe. (P. 340.)

that now, as though to mock the assembled company, he, too, had a pipe in his mouth.

In an agony of terror Will now turned to the big stout man and cried, "In the name of him you serve, who are you and what do you want with me?"

The big man took three whiffs from his pipe in solemn silence, then he handed his pipe to his servant and replied coldly:

"I am Alfred Franz van der Swelder, captain of the ship Carmilhan from Amsterdam, which was lost with all hands on this rocky coast on the return journey from Batavia. These are my officers and passengers, and those are my brave sailors, all of whom were drowned with me. Why have you called us from out the depths of the sea? Why do you disturb our rest?"

"I wish to know where the treasures of the Carmilhan lie hidden."

"At the bottom of the sea."

"Where?"

"In the Cavern of Steenfoll."

"How can I reach them?"

"A goose will dive after a herring, are not the treasures of the Carmilhan worth much more?"

"How much shall I succeed in obtaining?"

"More than you will ever be able to spend."

The little yellow man grinned and the whole assembly burst out laughing.

"Have you finished your questioning?" asked the captain.

"I have, farewell!" replied Will.

"Farewell, until we meet again," answered the Dutchman, and turned to go.

The musicians again led the procession, and they turned to depart in the same order in which they had come, singing the same solemn chant, which faded away in the distance until at length it became lost in the sound of the waves beating upon the shore.

Will now exerted all his strength to free himself from the hide that wrapped him round so tightly.

He succeeded at last in freeing one arm and then commenced to loosen the cords that fastened him into the hide, until he had untied all the knots and rolled out of the hide. Without losing a moment he hastened home, where he found poor Caspar lying unconscious upon the floor of the hut. Having restored him to his senses with some trouble the good fellow wept tears of joy to see once again the friend of his youth, whom he believed to have lost for ever. But his joy was soon quenched when Will told him of the desperate undertaking he had now on hand.

He brought to the surface an iron chest full of gold pieces. (P. 344.)

"I could no longer endure the misery of this wretched place," he said, "now that it is within my power to attain riches for us both. Follow me or not, as you will."

With these words Will took up a torch, a flint and steel, and a rope and hastened away. Caspar followed as quickly as he could and found his friend standing by the crevice in the rock leading to the Cavern of Steenfoll. He was making ready to lower himself by the rope into the black depths below.

Finding that all his entreaties to desist availed nothing, Caspar prepared to descend with his friend,

but Will bade him remain where he was and hold the rope. With fearful exertions, which only the blindest avarice could have driven him to make, he succeeded in climbing down into the cavern until he reached a portion of projecting rock beneath which the black waves dashed to and fro, crested with white foam. He gazed eagerly into the water and saw something gleaming in the depths. Laying aside his torch, he dived beneath the waves and seized a heavy object, which he brought up to the surface. It was an iron chest full of gold pieces. He told his companion what he had found, but paid no attention to his entreaties to be content with what he had and to re-ascend. Will thought he had but obtained the first fruits of his labours and dived again. A mocking laugh arose from the depths of the sea, and the diver rose no more.

Such was the end of Will Hawk. Caspar went home a changed man. The terrible experiences he had undergone were too much for his weak head and sensitive heart and unsettled his mind. He allowed everything belonging to him to go to rack and ruin, and wandered about day and night, staring before him with unseeing eyes, and pitied but avoided by all.

A fisherman is said to have seen and recognised Will Hawk, one stormy night, amongst the crew of the Carmilhan, close to the shore, and on the same night Caspar Stump disappeared and was never seen again, although he was sought for in every direction.

Folks aver, however, that from that time forward the crew of the Carmilhan appear at certain times in the Cavern of Steenfoll and that both Will Hawk and Caspar Stump are seen with them.

CENTRAL CIRCULATION
CHILDREN'S ROOM

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